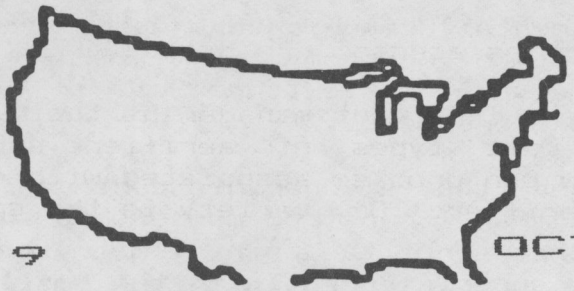
TURFCOMMS



V. 5, I. 9 OCT. 13, '90

PURPOSE: To pass on what we learn willingly and happily to others in the profession so as to improve turf conditions around the country.

GCSAA MEMBERSHIP - I stand corrected on the number of members this organization contains. I said 6500 in the June issue. It should have read 10,000 of which 6500 are superintendents. One member wrote, "Turfcomms should be trying to help us make great strides in marketing our association to those superintendents who have chosen not to be members."

Perhaps by pointing out what I feel is a restrictive dues structure I can help out.

This individual went on to note, "The dues of $210.00 per year is roughly 30% the amount paid by PGA members and 20% paid by CMA members." I called PGA of America and found that dues in this organization vary between the 15 classifications of head professionals. Sectional (usually state) dues vary from $90 to $400. The dues also vary dependent on the amount of liability insurance they take. Base membership fee is $100, add sectional dues and insurance costs to that.

A call to the Club Managers Association (CMA) netted me the brusque answer of $390 for this year.

The above individual went on to write, "In fact, for any professional organization that ($210) is very reasonable." Well I find it the highest of any organization I belong to. In the last year I paid the following in dues to belong to professional organizations:

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GCSAA -$210.00
Turf and Ornamental Communicators Assn. - - - $75.00
American Society of Agronomy - - - - - - - - - $69.00
American Society of Horticulture Sci. - - - - $65.00
Golf Course Writers Assoc. - - - - - - - - - - $40.00

One might well argue that a superintendent can obtain more for his GCSAA membership than I can from membership in any one of the other four. But that's not the point I'm trying to make. $210 dues discourages the superintendent with the small salary, at the small golf course who has to pay his own dues. Thus the GCSAA has become an organization which does not represent the rank and file superintendent.

Maybe it never did. Maybe it shouldn't. But I find it hard to believe the value of some of GCSAA's surveys, such as the one published recently showing almost all golf courses had certified pesticide applicators. A GCSAA survey of its membership does not represent U.S. golf courses in general. Such a survey represents the big to moderate budget clubs. In Texas there are 680 plus golf courses according to the 1987 edition of Texas Golf but, only 277(+ or -) superintendents listed in GCSAA's directory

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GREEN PAVEMENT - Several years ago I reported being at a meeting on use of native plants where turf was referred to rather derisively as "Green Pavement." It stunned me some to think that "environmentalist" would think that negatively about turf. But, I could not deny that the prairie and forest they yearned for would absorb rainfall better that turf.

Now I have some figures I can throw back at them be there a next time. You, if willing, can help there be a next time. I am using Golf Course & Grounds: Irrigation and Drainage by Albert R. Jarrett this semester. On pages 163 and 164 he has tables of runoff coefficients for agricultural areas and urban areas. These are presented on a scale of 0.0 to 1.00; where 0.0 represents a completely pervious surface and 1.00 is the coefficient for a completely impervious surface. The runoff coefficient for a flat, 0-5% slope, woodlands on sandy loam is a 0.10 -> parks, cemeteries a 0.18 -> Playgrounds a 0.28 -> streets a 0.83.

My interpretation of that information is that untrampled turf in good condition (parks and cemeteries) is very close to woodlands under their best condition for absorbing rainfall. Woodlands at their worst with 10 to 30% slope and on tight clay soil have a value of 0.60. Even playgrounds which I would rate as turf under the worst of conditions is still a very large improvement over pavement and closer to woodlands in its coefficient.

So stick the above in your Defending Turf File for future use.

DR. C. REED FUNK RECEIVES THE USDA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD - At a June, Washington, D.C. award ceremony for Cooperative State Research Service and the State Agricultural Experiment Station workers, Dr. Reed Funk of Kentucky bluegrass, Poa trivialis, tall fescue and perennial ryegrass fame was awarded the USDA's Distinguished Service Award for 1990. The award was given "For distinguished scientific achievements in turf breeding and outstanding contributions to the turf industry and the general public."

If you have used Adelphi, Able I, America, Bonnieblue, Bristol, Classic, Challenger, Dawn, Destiny, Eclipse, Liberty, Midnight, P-104, Suffolk, Alpine and Nassau cultivars of Kentucky bluegrass; Manhattan perennial ryegrass, Rebel tall fescue you have used a direct product of Dr. Funk's work.

You should also realize this unassuming dedicated plant breeder had much to do with the development of Sabre roughstalk bluegrass (Poa trivialis), 70 percent of the turf-type ryegrass germplasm currently used world-wide, and 80 percent of the new turf-type tall fescue germplasm.

Dr. Funk has done his work at Rutgers Univ., N.J. but the cultivars of grasses he has helped develop are used in all of these United States.

INNISBROOK RESORT, TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA - This is a place where a two year student with some experience can work as a supervisor for a salary that when divided by the 80+ hours he will work will amount to a little more than $3.50 per hour. And if he or she sticks with it and doesn't get fired before six months is up he will most likely find himself with seniority amongst the 13 secondary level assistants (slaves) this Resort hires regularly.

That's right, SENIORITY IN SIX MONTHS, I've known two that have gone this route to date. Management by intimidation appears to be the philosophy of this golfing resort owned by the famous Wadsworth Construction Co., another golf course construction company I've stopped recommending. A resort my students won't probably be going to after graduation also.

I have two graduates presently looking for a position and another two will graduate in December.

AERIFICATION RESEARCH - If you have been following the research in the last 10 years on aerification you would be realizing that aerification is not all it has been cracked up to be. Studies have shown a definite compaction zone down in the soil where the tines stop their penetration.

Research by Brauen, et al reported in the 1990 Turfgrass Field Day handout of the Puyallup Research and Extension Center of Washington State University compared solid (shatter core) vs hollow tine aerification of a bentgrass turf. The turf was aerified zero, two, four or six times per year for five years. All plots were sand topdressed six times a year after the aerifications whether aerified or not.

"Soil bulk density steadily increased numerically" at the 10-13 cm depth "as the number of aerifications increased annually which may indicate the development of a compacted zone in time." "Field saturated hydraulic conductivity was higher with SOLID TINE CORING* then hollow tine coring."
*Emphasis mine.

It hurts to type that quote from Brauen's research. I find it hard to accept that the percolation rate thru a soil is better where solid tines were used than where hollow tines were used.

AERIFICATION WITH A WATER CANNON: Or should that read MACHINE GUN. This newest invention of TORO, The HydroJect 3000 Aerator, should be a great way to handle localized dry spots on bentgrass greens in the summer.

One superintendent I talked to was very impressed. He said you couldn't see where it had made a hole on his greens unless it was slowed down to make the real deep holes it is capable of. Then a small amount of mud came to the surface.

What bothers me about this latest twist to aerification is similar to what bothers me about shatter core aerification and the Vertidrain approach. What happens to the soil that was there before the hole was made. Where does the high pressure water burst pushes the soil particles to? In normal aerification that soil is pulled out of the hole and placed on the surface. Whereas the soil in greens aerified by shatter core, Vertidrain or the Hydroject 3000 is pushed to the side or down to the bottom of the hole.

The Vertidrain does have a lifting action which does compensate for its otherwise shatter core approach. However, to avoid rippling of the putting surface this lifting action is usually set to the minimum. The price of a "WATER CANNON" is a bit expensive, $21,000, but this will be met by entrepreneurs who will rent you its use during July and August when you wouldn't dare run their Vertidrains across your greens.

Aerification is a very important management tool, not done often enough. Using different types of aerifiers during the season should avoid the plow pan problem associated with constant use of the old hollow tine aerifier. Or, variety is the spice of life.

END