

As I sit down to write this President's message, my staff is out cleaning up the debris from the "killer storm" that ripped across the country March 12-13.

My golf course is a mess and looks as bad as it did after Hurricane Andrew, whose eye passed 70 miles south of here. We'll be cleaning up all week, but I feel extremely fortunate (again) when others so near suffered so much worse — Dan Jones, our Editor Emeritus from Banyan Golf Club, is only two miles from here and he has over 300 trees down and other serious damage from a tornado spawned by the storm. The thermometer is dropping,

and by tomorrow night we could reach the first freezing temperatures we've had in South Florida in over three years — a fitting finish to a strange and difficult golfing season.

For some superintendents, it may also mark the finish of their employment. Rumors and speculations are circulating about superintendents who may soon lose their jobs because of member unhappiness with course conditions this unusual and unpredictable winter season.

I received a call myself just this morning from the green committee chairman of a nearby club asking for help in finding a new superintendent.

It is unfortunate, unfair and ironic, that we are often the victims of our own professional expertise — our members have come to expect outstanding conditions at all times, believing us capable of circumventing even the powerful force of Mother Nature.

Our jobs have gotten tougher and more demanding year after year, and, other than ourselves, who can we count on to help us meet these challenges and remain among the

employed?

The answer? Each other. Your fellow superintendents and other professionals who belong to the various golf and turf-related associations — The Florida GCSA, FTGA, GCSAA, and USGA.

I've thought a lot about our professional associations since the GCSAA convention, and the message the membership was sending to the GCSAA Board and staff. Where would we be without these organizations?

Would we still be wearing overalls, working out of a barn, and jealously guarding our trade secrets for our personal job security? Would golf course maintenance have advanced to the high level it is today, without these professional associations pointing the way, providing education, funding research, and forging bonds of friendship and cooperation that last a lifetime?

It is hard for me to imagine a career in turf management without these associations. It is hard for me to imagine superintendents who fail to see the benefits of belonging to these associations.

The leadership of these organizations may move in directions that many members do not support, as demonstrated by the defeat of the GCSAA bylaw proposals, but this does not negate the overall positive contributions of the association. Neither does it negate the fact that everyone owes something to the profession that sustains him.

As we move forward with our professional association programs we need everyone to get involved. There are no free rides out there. If you're not a member of the FGCSA and FTGA then you should join today. Your support will help our industry to reach new heights and explore new directions for tomorrow's golf courses. Do your duty and call 1-800-732-6053 and 1-800-882-6721.

For more information, the future is in your hands.

No free rides out there



Mark Jarrell, CGCS
President
FGCSA