News coverage to be expanded in '92

It's hard to believe that summer is half over and we're working on fall issues and planning for 1992. Just the other day, registration forms for the GCSAA showed up! In case you haven't received yours, dates are Feb. 14-17, 1992, in New Orleans, La.

I recently met with our editors to plan our editorial features for 1992. I can assure you Golf Course News will expand our editorial coverage into some exciting new areas. The editorial features appear monthly and I will share the upcoming schedule as soon as it is finalized.

This was my first full exposure to these educational and fun events. Both efforts are the target of a three-hole course and a masterful 15-acre practice range, both of which can be used by the general public when handicapped people are not booked.

Helpers from the golf industry include Wadsworth Construction Co., the builder; Hardzan Design Group, the course architect; LESCO, Inc. and Commercial Pump, who donated their products. They donated everything that was needed — giving of themselves for others. That's unique in this year 1991.

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**GUEST COMMENTARY**

**Hiers comment**

Continued from page 12 toward bringing a scientific and balanced view toward pesticides and golf courses in general.

1) Know the p.e.'s plan. Can you imagine a major college football coach and his associates not taking the time to study game films of their next opponent, or a general planning a major attack without the benefits of surveillance or intelligence?

For years, we in the golf industry have addressed every issue except the p.e.'s who have unjustly attacked pesticides and golf courses. Until we address this problem rather than its symptoms, the battle will continue to be a losing one. The p.e.'s, once understood, are fairly easy to identify: anti-capitalistic, anti-technology, pro-socialist, pro-distortion, and pro adding to the size and cost of government.

**The real versus the perceived**

The following list of 30 hazards were ranked by Decision Research — and reported in the February 1982 issue of Scientific American in terms of perceived risks according to several test groups, and by actual risks based on scientific data:

1. smoking
2. alcoholic beverages
3. motor vehicles
4. handguns
5. electric power
6. motorcycles
7. swimming
8. surgery
9. X-rays
10. railroads
11. general aviation
12. large construction
13. bicycles
14. hunting
15. food appliances
16. fire fighting
17. coal mining
18. contraceptives
19. commercial aviation
20. nuclear power
21. mountain climbing
22. power mowers
23. scholastic football
24. fishing
25. vaccinations
26. food cooking
27. food preservatives
28. pesticides
29. prescription antibiotics
30. spray cans

Their plan: Bring a new order to America, go back to the "good old days," grow your own food, limit technology, increase politically correct education; all this plus a new twist, at least for this country, redistribute the wealth. Isn't it amazing that the countries that employ these ideologies are generally the world's worst abusers of our environment and people?

2) Expose the p.e.'s with truth, integrity and facts.

Truth and facts are to a p.e. what flea spray is to a flea, they can't live with it. It has been said the strongest thing on earth is the truth. We cannot afford to exaggerate one fact or figure. We have to build a solid foundation because we are addressing people with no moral laws. Remember, they will use any method to advance their cause. We must be prepared to face stiff opposition early on, even among well-intentioned Americans who have been misled the past three decades.

3) Get our house in order.

We have the unenviable task of having to live up to the expectations not imposed on other segments of society. The p.e.'s have lured Americans into a zero risk mentality (with no grasp of risk/benefit) toward pesticides, when it is not demanded in any other arena — automobiles, drugs, etc. As a result, thanks in part to the media which gravitates toward the negative, our chain (superintendents) can only be as strong as the weakest link.

Unfortunately, there are still superintendents or clubs who feel no responsibility to participate in the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America or its continuing education programs.

All the best efforts of 10,000 diligent, environmentally conscious superintendents can be severely impaired by one who is uninformed.

The GCSAA has done an outstanding job responding to its members through environmental education. But just being a member of GCSAA and your local chapter is not enough. It is imperative to participate in GCSAA and local chapter seminars, field days and other educational programs.

Finally, just do the basics and do them well. Remember, your shop and equipment clean, train and motivate your employees, and adhere to the regulations. Don't deviate from the law. There's too much at stake, individually and collectively.

If you don't know or understand the regulations (and that's common) find a superintendent who does — but do it! Take the time to study and develop concepts of integrated plant management. For years top superintendents have successfully used this program and continue to fine tune it.

4) Inform/educate the public and earn its trust.

We must become pro-active, not reactive. In almost every town there is a superintendent adept at speaking to audiences. They need to address our Rotary, Lions, garden and flower clubs, etc. to tell the truth about pesticides and golf courses. A good way to start each presentation would be with GCSAA's new video "Links with Nature," which highlights a course's interaction and actual enhancement of the environment and wildlife. An excellent way to demonstrate positive benefits of courses to the public would be to join New York Audubon Society's Cooperative Sanctuary Program. This would be a wise and beneficial investment for any club. Continued involvement and dissemination of factual information will be paramount in earning the public's trust.

5) Inform/educate the media and build a foundation of credibility.

Get to know the local media so they can place faces with names. Again, keeping your complex and equipment in immaculate condition will build a powerful and positive connotation toward you and your course. Don't expect too much too soon because good leadership usually doesn't make exciting headlines and most members of the media have been saturated with one-sided anti-pesticide propaganda.

A caveat here: Some members of the media do not want facts or balance — so be careful!

6) Educate politicians and agencies. This will continue to be difficult, but some inroads have been made. We cannot wait for them to come to us. We have to visit them.

Finally, we must persist and set the example. Remember, peoples' minds are changed through observation and not through argument. The challenge ahead seems awesome, but we are not alone. One of our greatest allies will be the true environmentalists (who include the majority of superintendents) with no secret agenda. They are very concerned that the p.e.'s will harm and even discredit the real cause.

What is the real cause? Protecting and enhancing the environment through conservation, recycling, planting trees, non-political education, and research. (In 1989 $70 billion was spent on regulations and only 59 billion on research.)

Keep your mouth shut, as President Eisenhower once said, "A nation that values its privileges above its responsibility soon will lose both."

As golf course superintendents and citizens, we have the unique privilege of living in a world of nature and living in America. Our responsibility is obvious: Take our jobs seriously, do the work honestly, strive to improve our environment, and leave this world with something our children will be proud to inherit.

And our scientists have a responsibility. Where have the real scientists been the last two decades? It's time to stand up and be counted. As for all the p.e.'s, I'll leave you with this simple thought.

Being an American is the right to be wrong, not the right to do wrong.

GOLF COURSE NEWS