



If I Only Had Known Then, What I Know Now...

By Mike McCullough, NCGA Agronomist

What do golfers and maintenance workers have in common? The sun. Who out there hasn't had a bad case of sunburn at some time in their life? The likelihood of being in this profession and not having a case of sunburn is like never missing a three-foot putt - highly unlikely.

Working or playing in the great outdoors is truly an occupational hazard. However, just because a person works or plays on a golf course does not mean he or she has to become the next statistic at the dermatologist's office. The next few paragraphs will describe my story with skin cancer and some helpful tips in being a little brighter about sun exposure (pun intended).

As a youngster, I had my share of sunburns, but nothing that I would consider to be life threatening, at least not then. As time has passed by, I have realized that those minor incidences during my formative years have had major consequences later in life: skin cancer.

Reports claim there are as many as 300,000 to 1 million new cases of skin cancer each year. Ninety-five percent of all skin cancers are caused by UV (ultraviolet) light. Many researchers believe that 80 percent of skin damage occurs before the age of 20. Other studies found that just one severe sunburn during this time frame can

double the risk for skin cancer.

After reading and studying this information on skin cancer, I finally determined that I was a high-risk candidate (I have fair skin and reddish-blond hair). When I was growing up in the 70s and 80s, there were only a few products that provided any type of skin protection.

Available products were mostly suntan lotions with maximum protection of 10 or 12 SPF (sun protection factor). Even though I spent most summers outdoors, I rarely used these products. Now I seriously regret that.

I was first diagnosed with basal cell carcinoma on my neck at the age of 25. During the next couple of years, two surgical procedures were performed to remove these cancers from my neck. Eight years later I am skin cancer free.

There are three major types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and malignant melanoma. Most skin cancers can be easily cured when detected at an early stage. If there is a spot or mole that has grown or changed colors recently, get it checked out immediately. Skin cancer, if left undetected, can have fatal outcomes.

Today most dermatologists recommend applying a lotion with a minimum SPF factor of 15 for all skin types, at least 30 minutes before anticipated exposure to the sun. Reapply sunscreens after a couple of hours

outside. Remember, the larger the SPF number, the more protection for the skin.

Other important tools in the fight against skin cancer are lip balms with SPF, wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses that block all UV rays. All hats should have at least a one-inch brim. While baseball hats may provide adequate protection for the face and scalp, they do not do a good job protecting the ears and neck.

The \$64,000 question is, "Do I wear sunscreen every time I go outside?" Yes and no.

If my outdoor activity is going to take longer than 15 minutes, then yes, I liberally apply the sunburn prevention lotion. If I am only outside for a few moments, then no, I do not apply any sunscreen. It is good habit to apply sunscreens no matter if the exposure is two minutes or four hours.

Another benefit from having had skin cancer is semi-annual visits to the dermatologist. Frequent monitoring of questionable areas of the skin provides peace of mind. Whether it is bright and sunny or dull and overcast, take a little precaution and apply sunscreens. It is never too early or too late to protect the skin from the sun's damaging rays.

Ask me, because I have proof — on my neck. /

NorCal Superintendents Big Winners in Orlando

By Ken Williams, CGCS

GCSANC member Jeff Arneson of Redwood Empire G & CC in Fortuna had the good fortune to win this year's 27-Hole Challenge at the GCSAA Conference in Orlando. Jeff's Grand Prize winning scorecard was drawn from thousands of entries in this year's event. His prize is an all-expense golf vacation to Scotland for four people.

Jeff's a pretty good player so he's really looking forward to the trip this August or September. He's never been to Scotland, let alone played the famous links. Notes Jeff, "I really couldn't believe it when they called me, I had to call back to GCSAA headquarters three times before I was sure!" Asked whom he was going to take on the nine-day

\$20,000 trip, Jeff says, "Definitely my wife but the others are still up in the air. I asked a superintendent buddy of mine, but he actually backed out, I couldn't believe it!" Asked what the trick to winning was, Jeff said he actually forgot his card in the hotel room the first day of the conference. He was going around the show that day with friends giving them serious grief for slowing down at each banner to stamp their cards. Luckily for Jeff, he brought his card the next day, completed it, and the rest is history.

It was a good conference for some other Northern California superintendents as well.

Kevin Breen, CGCS of Lahontan GC in Truckee won third prize in the 27-hole challenge (a Gateway Computer Package)

and Leonard F. Theis of Sun City Roseville GC was the "Get Connected" winner and received a Sony CLIE Handheld. Congratulations guys, nice to see winners from NorCal!

Did You Know That . . .

By Gary Carls, CGCS

- The cost of construction of the Silverado CC in 1956 was \$200,000.
- In 1952 GCSANC had only 9 voting members of the GCSAA.
- In 1952 attendance at GCSAA Conference and Show in Columbus, Ohio was 750.