

In·My·Opinion

Philip York

WHEN asked to write this editorial, my first reaction was to devote the entire article to recent in-fighting within the turfgrass industry.

However, having witnessed firsthand the degree of goodwill among the various British groups at the recent GCSAA conference and exhibition in Las Vegas and the emphasis in publications to re-introduce harmony in our trade, I have decided to add weight, not to the controversy, but to urging patience and restraint in publicising opposing views. I would also impress upon those involved in disagreements, of whatever type, that if we are to have a healthy industry, then we should unite, in the interests of the trade as a whole, to provide a common front to our customers.

We have a fantastic growth opportunity ahead. Increasing leisure time will necessitate the provision of more and more amenity areas and the updating of present facilities to provide for greater use. The funding of such projects, whether by private or public money, is of paramount importance. It is essential that, for the future well being of the industry, such money is wisely spent in ensuring customer and user satisfaction.

Whether an agronomist, contractor, specifier, manufacturer, greenkeeper or groundsman, we are all entitled to our own views of what is best. Nevertheless, to ensure long term customer confidence, we should be cautious not to specify or supply sub-standard. We should never

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discourage healthy competition and innovation. Too often there is under specifying with an attitude of 'it will all come right on the day.' Let's think a little more before committing to such a course of action.

In the irrigation trade, dissatisfaction with one project (not Toro) in one, albeit small, sector of the market caused a total ban on any similar scheme, regardless of product and the degree of expertise applied in the design—and that in spite of three similar, highly successful Toro systems!

Press releases are only made when there is guaranteed success! Very little, if anything, is publicised of problems in increasingly 'newsy' trade publications but, and it is a big but,

word travels fast between golf clubs and public authorities.

In many cases, the final decision to purchase rests with either a committee or individual possessing little or no knowledge of the product, service or application. It is, therefore, paramount that the purchaser is given clear and concise justification of the needs. And that there should not be any nagging doubts in his mind regarding the product's suitability brought on by reading the public disagreements mentioned previously.

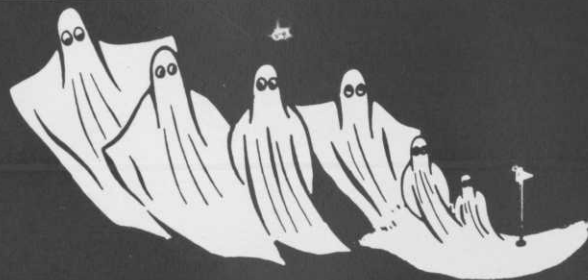
Toro, whether in the USA, UK or Europe, has always taken the view that, as a leading supplier of innovative and quality products, it should be at the forefront of educational programmes (such as six recent service courses), whether for the trade generally or for the company's direct benefit. Toro is always willing to assist in the industry's development, but the present divisions can only water down commercial involvement.

One final point—the National Turfgrass Council is an excellent vehicle to focus views on research, education, etc. There are some notable absentees who, by not joining, are going to benefit from its objectives without contributing—this surely is a selfish attitude and one to be deplored.

A united front will be a strong front, socially and economically. Ours is a trade that has an enviable reputation for co-operation and friendship—let's keep it that way!



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