

# the Bull Sheet

Official publication of the MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS.

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Official Photographer — Raymond Schmitz

Dr. Randy T. Kane, Turfgrass Advisor  
University of Illinois & CDGA — (708) 954-2753



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Editor —

Fred D. Opperman  
810 Greenwood Avenue  
Carpentersville, IL 60110  
Phone (708) 428-5009

Fax (708) 428-5009

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## On Course With the President

Sadly, the advent of this topic was addressed in this column all too recently. It now appears as though the summer golf season of 1994 is indeed rapidly shaping up to be a golf season of environmental confrontation and the defense of our golf courses and the manner in which we, as Superintendents, manage the materials we apply to the golf course. The environmentalists are focusing on the golf courses and those who manage them with a renewed vengeance. No matter the beauty of golf courses, no matter the recreational value of golf, no matter the sovereignty of golf's open spaces, no matter the myriad benefits of golf to the environment, these environmental critics are determined to make life miserable for anyone associated with the management of golf. These meddling know-it-alls are not content to leave well enough alone with issues of their own, they are determined to undermine virtually anything that does not serve their own self-interest. And it seems that golf courses are in clear sight of their guns.

And I guess it's not too hard to figure why ... Arguably, golf is regarded by many of the populous as an elitist pastime enjoyed by only those of considerable financial means and therefore golf is highly exclusionary. Plainly that is untrue but nevertheless golf courses then become an easy target of those who feel left out of the action and want to hurt those who so enjoy the game. Not only are they sadly and completely uninformed of the joys of the game of golf; those very same individuals (and groups too) refuse to acknowledge any benefit whatsoever of anything even remotely associated with golf. They ignore the abundance and variety of wildlife that populate our many acres of open grassy savannas. They ignore the variety and health of the plant material. They ignore the competence and care with which the golf courses and our environment is managed. They ignore everything but what serves to initiate some feeling of public panic. Simply put, these 'concerned individuals' will resort to all manner of ways to focus the public eye on the "alleged excesses" of the golf courses and those who manage them.

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The focus of the public eye has dramatically narrowed already this young golf season. An early May article published in "The Wall Street Journal" chronicled the alleged dangers inherent at any golf facility. The headlines screamed "Golf Courses Denounced as Health Hazards" and the article went on to list the usual dirge of issues relating to golf and the environment. Thankfully, GCSAA President Joseph G. Baidy and the GCSAA Executive Staff were quick to respond point by point to the article and it's content. But not before the WSJ article was read and discussed by millions of readers and the damage was done.

So, it looks to be an interesting season and certainly one of an intensified environmental awareness. Be ready and at your stead, the issue of the environment surrounds us and the challenges are on the way. More than ever before we are faced with defending that with which we are so intimately associated.

ATF