



Presidents Message

REMEMBER - The boy scouts' motto - "Be Prepared"? As the hurricane season approaches, we as golf course superintendents and turf grass managers should be prepared. Prepared for the worst.

Unless you have actually been in a major hurricane, tornado, flood; witnessed the results of death and injury from lightning damage, or been in combat, it's hard to visualize the actual chain of events that happen, usually very quickly, and how you or other people around you will react.

Having experienced all of the above situations as a participant, I have great respect for the acts of mother nature. I'm also a strong believer in the motto "be prepared".

You can be prepared for almost any situation with some forethought in setting goals and realistic objectives for what you wish to accomplish.

In 1946 upon graduation from high school I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Almost all the young men and some young ladies joined various military services at that time. They didn't have to, but at that time in history we considered love of country and patriotism extremely important.

Looking back as I know many of my peers do that served in the military services, we were in most cases well prepared. I spent 16 weeks at Paris Island, So. Carolina in boot camp. I didn't always enjoy it but we were prepared. We even had training in hurricane preparations and procedures. From boot camp to Camp Pendleton Ca. and six weeks of advanced combat training and raider training at the conclusion of which we considered ourselves well prepared and had received the best possible *training* in the world available at that time. Most of this training was done by truly qualified professional N.C.O's. and "mustangs" those officers who rose thru the ranks, their advancement by being there and were recognized and promoted on merit and leadership abilities.

After two years of service, travel, training and more training, it was back home and off to college for more training and education.

I was fortunate to go to the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. When Professor L.S. Dickinson was actively teaching and training men for the future demands of golf course maintenance work, he often brought leaders of the profession to the class room to provide lectures and training to his students. The early conferences at the cage I'm sure are remembered by many who attended those early turf conferences. Geoffrey Cornish was an instructor working towards his master's degree at that time.

In 1950 I was recalled to active duty in the Korean conflict. Eleven months later I was back in school for more training and education.

Enough about me, I only used my own experiences to emphasize my reasons for being prepared and a strong supporter for training. Training before the fact as it relates to almost everything we do. In the case of hurricanes -there is no valid reason not to be prepared as so much advance warnings are communicated to the public as are numerous excellent procedures as to what to do before, during and after the hurricane.

Surprisingly, though, too many people will ignore all of the above until the last moment.

I've been fortunate throughout my career as a golf superintendent to have worked at corporate owned or private country clubs that were highly safety oriented as relates to all their facilities and especially the club's number one asset, their employees. In all cases these corporations and clubs had safety committees made up of all levels of employees, line employees and top types of management to witness that good policy starts at the bottom where involved employees know what is actually going on.

I consider being on a safety committee an opportunity to learn, to share ideas, to work with and get to know your peers' concerns. Sharing experiences and knowledge prevents accidents and trains people how to react if an accident should occur.

If by chance you don't have a hurricane procedure plan call me or write our office and a plan will be forthcoming. Don't take a chance - be prepared.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dick Blake". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Dick Blake
President, FL GCSA