

In the last issue of *The Florida Green*, I wrote an article about the dark side of the environmental movement which was well received. I'd like to follow up that article with a few more comments.

First I urge all superintendents attending this year's Poa Annuu weekend in Naples to sign up for the FGCSA's educational program by Dr. Michael Coffman. I believe you will receive no more important information for the preservation of your job and the welfare of this country than the message you get from Dr. Coffman.

Copies of Dr.

Coffman's first bok, *Environmentalism: The Dawn of Aquarius or the Twilight of a New Age*, and his new one, *Saviors of the Earth?* will be available to those wishing to purchase it.

By now, most superintendents have heard about the preliminary results of the GCSAA-sponsored, superintendent-mortality study released at the conference and show in Dallas this past February.

Based on this study, using statistical analysis of death certificates of 618 former GCSAA members, it appears that *those* superintendents actually *did* have higher rates of certain types of cancer than the population at large. No conclusions can be drawn regarding cause and effect.

The study is based on superintendents who practiced their "art" — as opposed to "science" — in the infancy stages of

pesticide use, during the 1930s through 1960s.

Little regard was paid to proper training or safety, and many of the products used then are no longer available because of their dangerous nature.

We have all heard the stories from our older superintendents about mixing lead arsenate with mercury in poorly ventilated rooms wearing no protective clothing or respirators, or how these materials or similar ones were applied in a cloud of dust by similarly unprotected persons. Older superintendents have commented that they are surprised that more of them haven't contracted cancer, given the unsafe practices of 20 years ago and more.

Considering these past unsafe practices, any of us could logically conclude that superintendents should have a higher incidence of pesticide-exposure-induced cancers, but this is not what has yet been determined.

As Dr. Burton Kross, head researcher of this study, says, "Because this is a statistical study, you can't establish any cause-and-effect relationship from the data".

In other words, nothing from this study so far implicates pesticide exposure as the cause of cancer.

Lung cancer was identified as the major concern and was the cause of death in 59 of the 818 cases studied. But we have no way of knowing how many of these former GCSAA members were smokers.

Statistically significant excess mortality from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and brain cancer were also discovered, but toxicological data and epidemiological

*And
furthermore,
I'd like
to say . . .*

Mark My Words



Mark Jarrell

Mark Jarrell, CGCS

Jarrell: We'd better acknowledge our image

evidence linking these cancers to pesticide exposure are inconclusive.

Large intestine and prostate cancer mortality rates were also higher than the general population of white males.

All these statistics really mean is that further research is warranted, which is exactly what is going to happen in the second phase of this study. Information may be developed which proves conclusively that pesticide exposure contributed to the early deaths of some superintendents in the past and, perhaps, some useful safety precautions will be recommended for those of us using pesticides today.

And maybe not... which brings me to the point of this article: the golf industry had better wake up and acknowledge the fact that 90% of the population of the U.S. does not play golf, and that golf is perceived as elitist, non-essential, polluting, resource-wasting despoiler of the environment by a large percentage of non-golfers.

Things will never change until our positive environmental message is taken to the mainstream media. We need to quit preaching to the choir.

Within one day of release of the preliminary report on the GCSAA mortality study, syndicated radio moron Paul Harvey "reported" that "not only are golf course pesticides killing the birds, but they're killing golf course superintendents also."

You may recall that about a year ago, Mr. Harvey was taken to task by GCSAA and individuals for his broadcast claiming that golf course pesticides were responsible for the lack of songbirds at his home course, so this latest invective is obviously an immature reprisal.

Mr. Harvey's irresponsibility is especially disheartening because he is a golfer, but he is far from alone in his unfounded attacks on golf courses and their maintenance practices. FGCSA director Mike Mongoven recently faxed me an anti-golf diatribe from the Gannett News Service detailing "the hazards of golf," and golf architect Jan Beljan has collected dozens of similar articles from various sources over the past couple of years.

We think we are doing a good job of educating people to golf's positive environmental impact, but we are living in a very insulated world.

When I write an article for *Golfweek*, maybe 40,000 or 50,000 golfers will see it. An article like this in the *Florida Green* may be read by 4,000 or 5,000 - all in the golf industry - depending on how often our 3,000 copies get passed around.

An idiot like Paul Harvey is probably heard by hundreds of thousands, if not millions, and Gannett News Service stories are definitely read by millions.

Vice President Al Gore and EPA Director Carol Browner are still lacing up their boots, but I fear a heavy footprint will yet be tread upon the golf industry by these two before they leave office.

Our message needs to be heard by the general public.

How this is best accomplished, I haven't a clue. Perhaps the GCSAA, the USGA, the NGF, and all local golf and turfgrass associations need to pool resources to buy space in *USA Today* or other national newspapers, or even television time, to extol the valuable environmental contributions of turfgrass and golf courses.

Something needs to be done to reverse our negative image before it's too late.

Jackson: Interview with Mother Nature

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pleasing average temperatures for the tourism brochures? Listen Boobie, to get averages I have to create many highs and lows, and that goes for temperature, humidity, and rainfall."

Everybody in the cafe was staring at us. I could feel my neck and my ear lobes getting hot. I knew I wasn't going to win this argument. I counted slowly to 10 on an imaginary Stimpmeter to cool off before I spoke.

"Listen MN, we know you make the rules and you can break or bend them at will. Unfortunately, our bosses and our customers want us to follow a predetermined set of rules so they can sell a per-

fectly conditioned golf course 365 days a year.

"They don't understand your position half as well as we do, and you keep us guessing plenty. Although we hope for moderation on your part, we definitely pray for patience on their part when you challenge us with your unexpected highs and lows during transition."

Putting on my most sympathetic expression, I asked, "Have you ever considered taking lithium during the spring?"

She transfixed me with a laser stare that I knew was guiding a lightning bolt at my heart. Then she leaned back in her seat and laughed, "Lithium! Valium! Snapple! Jack Daniels! I've tried them all. Nothing really works me like seeing you guys scrambling around trying to hang in

there after I've gone crazy."

She put her hand on my arm and squeezed gently as she whispered in my ear, "Don't worry so much. You guys do a pretty good job of catching what I throw at you. I'm not making any promises mind you. I do have my responsibilities; but I will try to get the message across to your golfers."

The interview was over. She gathered up her belongings, slid off the stool, and headed for the door.

Halfway to the entrance she stopped, looked over her shoulder at me, winked and said, "You might want to cancel that verticutting you had planned for next week. There's a cold front coming out of Canada that's not on the maps yet and it's going to be a real stinker!"