

I have taken a keen interest in the tactics and spin that the radical so-called environmentalists have used to communicate with the citizens of our

nation. It is hard to determine if it is centrally controlled or if it is the work of many different factions coming from different directions.

At the Poa Annua we had a very informative program that David Court put together. The first three hours of the program were a lesson in media relations,

put on by Dow Elanco's Issues Manager, Terry Henderson. The program was interesting and timely. The last hour and a half, the class engaged in a lively panel discussion on the media. The

panel consisted of three reporters from the southwest Florida area. One of the reporters was from a local television station, another reporter covered local news for a local paper and the other person was a local sportswriter. All three of the reporters felt that they were fair and that they tried to explore both sides of an issue before they wrote or aired a story.

Many superintendents in the class had horror stories of misquotations and misrepresentations. Others did have positive stories of how they were properly portrayed. This brings me to my point, which is that everyone has a particular view and many people are not going to change.

Have you ever had an employee who

you felt was not carrying his share of the work? I have. Every time that I would confront one of these people, they would respond by telling me that they are one of the hardest workers on the staff, and I should look at others who they felt did not carry a fair share. I have found the same to be true with environmentalists and media. I recently wrote a letter to the editor of an well-known environmentalist magazine to dispute the slant they gave golf courses in one of their articles. I do not know if it was published (I doubt it), but I did get a reply. The reply was the same untruths and environmentalist packaging that they give many anti-golf stories. I have seen enough of it that I can recognize it by now. My letter had no effect on the individual, and his basic reply was, "the fact that golf is doing environmentally favorable things proves that it was hurting the environment in the first place."

In the May 1 edition of *Sports Illustrated*, in the Scorecard section, an article was written regarding the 25th anniversary of Earth Day. The first question that I had was why that magazine was doing this story in the first place.

The story lambasted the new Republican Congress and, oddly enough, the Clinton Administration, for its lack of movement in the environmental fields. What frustrates me with stories like that is that no credit is given to what has been done.

The mindset seems to be that the sky is falling, and everything that is done

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...a lively
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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Bell".

Scott Bell, CGCS
President, FGCSA

Golf is a solution, not a problem

In this issue I would like to share some excerpts from comments made by Robert Trent Jones, Jr. at the 1993 Green Section Education Conference:

"...No one is quite sure when the term was contrived. Perhaps it was back in the teens or even before that, but many of our early golf courses were called "country club." These early clubs and courses were located well out of the inner cities — out in the country. One reason they were there was because golf not only requires space, but they were also there because of the environment they provided for members and players of all ages.

In those early days, you went to your club in a horse and buggy or, later, in a Model-T with your clubs in the rumble seat. The streets of the city were littered with horse manure and, later, with smoke-belching autos. The environments of the major metro areas were not at all that delightful and even today, some

say that our cities are no better.

But at that country club, all was bright and beautiful. One hundred acres or more could be found of green grass, white sandy bunkers, and often a glittering blue sky. There were no horse droppings, no smoke, no noise, no clutter, no urgency, no problems...unless you considered a tough golf shot a problem.

With this in mind, we can say that "greens keepers" can be thought of as early environmentalists. They provided players with a place to go to enjoy nature and the great outdoors. These superintendents kindled the beliefs that courses provide habitat for wildlife and green spaces for all of us.

Isn't it strange that the game that found its earliest roots in environmentalism is often attacked today by those who call themselves environmentalists? Many of those people don't truly understand or appreciate the game of golf. They see it as a giant club with privileges not to be enjoyed by the populace; they see it as a wasteful use of land and water; and they see it as a residue of chemicals gone astray.

There are obviously some misconceptions and misunderstanding here, and it is our mission to heal this void and to bring more true understanding to these detractors and to make them realize that we — all of us superintendents — are true environmentalists.

This is not something new with us or with the game of golf. Golf course superintendents, with our absolute professionalism and sharp attention to maintenance methods, provide the best, cleanest and most wholesome environment we possibly can.

We must carry the message to these critics that golf may once have been a game for the well-to-do, but now it is played by everyone. Take them out to our municipal courses. Let them see the seniors, the women, the juniors, the peewees and the handicapped who play this game.

Let them see our strict adherence to tight regulations on chemical use, whether it is pesticides or fertilizer. Show them that we follow the rules — we often do better than what is regarded as standard practice.

We are what we have always been, with a long history and thousands of golf courses to prove it. We are dedicated environmentalists, and we are getting better at what we do each and every passing day!

So the message today is loud and clear. The environmental movement is here to stay and we are a major part of it. As devout and dedicated as we have been in the past — we can be even more so in the future.

The golf industry demands that we be good at what we do because there is no place for us if we aren't. We prove how good we are every day, just as the golf pros do on the tour. Just as those talented players have the best equipment with which to play the game, we also have remarkable tools and pieces of machinery to help us with our work.

It is time for each superintendent, and all others associated with the game of golf, to stand tall and proclaim that golf is not an environmental problem. Golf is an answer, one of the best answers we have, to make this world a better place in which to live, to play, and to enjoy a clean and healthy outdoor environment.

Plotner's Page



Greg Plotner, CGCS
Publications Chairman

'The doomsdayers are never going to go away'

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just makes our world worse. The environmentalists seem to take no credit, nor do they give any credit, for things improving. The environmental movement has been responsible for many major victories and some have been positive.

In the past 25 years, we have seen the creation of the EPA at national and state levels, the Clean Water Act, and the Clean Air Act, as well as the recycling of water, plastic, paper, metal and other materials. The movement has been, in my opinion, partly responsible for the movement of American factories and job out of our country, thus resulting in a lowering of living standards.

You may view some of the things listed above as positive or negative, but either way the environmentalist

movement has affected all of our lives. I feel that they do not want to admit that any of that is true, and they would rather keep playing David vs. Goliath and making America think that they are a small group, a faint voice in the wilderness, trying to save America and mankind from itself.

We cannot rest on our current position that seems kinder to us than in the past. Many environmental laws are restrictive and cumbersome, but we have learned to work with them and accept the costs. Some laws were necessary, and 25 years ago we had some very polluted waters and air. Much of that has been cleaned up to safer levels, and we need to question where the happy medium is.

The doomsdayers are never going to go away, and we will never change their minds. The best that we can hope for is to get the people in the

middle to our side. Many people are more skeptical of the environmentalists as they see costs associated with the environment going up and they see business handcuffed with regulations.

Keep informing people and doing positive things for our industry. Be judicious in your chemical and fertilizer usage. We can improve our situation, but it takes all of us.

This is the last of my President's Messages. I hope that you enjoyed them or that the messages at least made you think of our industry. After this past season, I think that it is evident that we all need to stick together and help each other out.

Thank you for letting me serve, as I have truly enjoyed it. Support Greg as you have me. Thanks to Marie, Paul, Greg, Dale, Kevin, Donnie, Debbie, Joe, Joel and my staff. 🍷

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