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**S**eems like the weather is still the hot topic of conversation as I write this message on Feb. 20.

While some people still think of El Niño

as only affecting California and the western U.S. coast, Florida and the entire Southeast is still experiencing its impact on our weather patterns.

We have had approximately 24 inches of rain since December on my course and there's no end in sight

yet! I know each part of the state has been affected differently, but I hope the GCSAA packets on Southeastern Winter Damage sent to GCSAA members has been of help to many of you.

Those of you who have had good greens this winter, I wish you would

share with other superintendents, through the *Florida Green*, anything special you did that you felt helped you get through this winter.

For those of us — including myself — with bad spots or even a few bad greens, would you also share how you managed your weak greens through this winter? Please share any maintenance practices that seemed to help and any rebuilding or resodding you had to do to fully recover.

I know there will be some job changes. Some of them from these circumstances beyond our control. I hope most employers will have the patience and understanding to let us get through this difficult winter season.

Mother Nature is not kind to us sometimes but we will survive. Hopefully soon in our conversations, we will be able to talk about the winter of 1997-98 in the past tense!

## Everybody's Still Talking About the Weather!

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Joe Ondo, CGCS  
President  
FGCSA

**T**he winter of 1997-1998 will undoubtedly go down in the annals as one of the all-time lousiest for growing grass. The much-proclaimed effects of El Niño has in some way adversely impacted everyone's life. Unfortunately, those of us who grow grass for a living are more severely impacted

than most. The worst affected in our ranks will be those who have paid the ultimate price... losing their jobs!

I find it extremely ironic to listen to the general public's willingness to accept higher produce prices in the grocery store due to the effects of our recent weather patterns.

On the other hand, the golfing public has no sympathy for the difficulties of producing acceptable playing conditions under the same weather conditions. This belies sound judgment and good reasoning. The vast majority of the comments I have heard revolve around the fact that we are making excuses in an attempt to protect our own positions.

In southern Palm Beach County where I am employed, a group of Green Committee Chairmen met in early February to discuss this very issue. They were addressed by Dr. Monica Elliott, who so eloquently described to them, in layman's terms, the difficulties with growing grass under these conditions. This presentation was arranged by a superintendent, who like many of us needed an "outside authority" to

authenticate what we had been relaying to our superiors.

Why then are superintendents losing jobs? With total disregard for the scientific evidence that has been presented from IFAS, the USGA and the GCSAA, some of our brethren are losing their positions at their respective clubs. It is truly unfortunate. I often wonder if our profession is held to that much of a higher standard than any other.

We all hear of corporate downsizing that seems prevalent in today's society. I would dare to venture that we are more the norm than the exception. In no way do I condone this activity, but as highly paid professionals, we must accept the fact that this is the way the business world operates.

I would hope that the GCSAA would come forward with acceptable industry standards for our employers to follow. It was suggested that your state association spearhead this activity. For the time being, we are taking a wait-and-see attitude on this subject.

#### **Fond Farewell**

Switching subjects. Along with many members of the FGCSA, I want to offer the best wishes to Dan and Irene Jones as they head into retirement. Dan is retiring this summer after spending 18 years at the Banyan Golf Club. We all owe Dan and Irene a debt of gratitude for their tireless efforts in taking the *Florida Green* magazine to its place of national prominence that it enjoys today. Dan and Irene, it is our entire association's sincere wish that the Good Lord will look kindly on both of you as you enjoy your retirement years.

## *The Winter of our Discontent*

### **PERHAM'S PAGE**



Michael Perham, CGCS  
Vice President  
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