

2001 and August 2002 was the second driest recorded over the past 107 years by the National Climatic Data Center and NOAA. However, since the early fall, most areas have now received in excess of 35 inches of rainfall and the drought restrictions in most areas have been removed. The period between September and November 2002 was the 99th wettest over the past 108 years.

Unfortunately, the frequent rains and below-normal temperatures accompanying the cloudy weather with the rain events has caused wet soil conditions and impacted the health of both cool- and warm-season turfgrasses.

Numerous inquiries have been received by the USGA Southeast Region office regarding golf course playing conditions over the past 60 days. Many golfers are perplexed about why their golf courses have turned into swamps, why the putting greens are not as firm, and why the overseeding has failed. Some golfers are even now questioning the abilities of their golf course superintendents due to their dissatisfaction with the presentation of the golf course.

It isn't a surprise that golfers are upset.

Over the past four years, during the drought, course playability was excellent overall at most golf facilities. Superintendents repeatedly informed us of the positives of the prolonged dry weather including the following:

- The game is more fun to play when it is dry. The ball rolls farther and golfers can play more of a variety of shots.
- Maximized revenues - no tee times lost due to weather.
- Less disease pressure.
- Mowing schedule uninterrupted.
- Maintenance more efficient (i.e. no bunker washouts, debris removal, etc.)

Now with the extended wet weather, superintendents are noting the following negative impacts:

- Lost revenue. Days and weeks of tee times cancelled due to rain.
- Maintenance schedule disrupted.
- Crisis jobs more frequent (debris removal, bunker washout repair, etc.)
- Carts restricted to path more often.
- Ideal conditions for weed seed germination and spread of weed seed.
- Diseases more common. Other pests such as algae, earthworms, and fire ants more problematic.

As we travel around the Southeast Region, every course has been impacted negatively by many of the following: muddy fairways, poor overseeding results, fairway and putting green disease issues, cart damage to fairways and roughs, and thin turf, and tees with lower density turf.

Fairway overseeding ended up being a complete waste of money in many instances and when successful, it was no panacea for these issues. Golfers should be patient and understand that course conditions aren't going to improve much until it dries up and the temperatures warm so the turf can recover.

MARK MY WORDS

Beyond Golf

By Mark Jarrell

My apologies in advance to my peers who expect this space to be devoted strictly to golf-course related issues, but I believe most will appreciate some provocative and controversial reflections on our country's future security since 9/11.

The terrorist attacks on our country have shaken us all and changed us forever. Maybe because I dodged a bullet with personal tragedy - my son had been working at the World Trade Center four months prior, and my closest



cousin working at the Pentagon was not on site - I've spent more time than most trying to understand the mentality of people who could commit such acts, and those around the world who cheered. That bastard Mohammad Atta had lived among us - had eaten dinner at The Olive Garden two miles from my house, for God's sake! - and was still filled with such hate for us that he could fly a plane into one of the World Trade Center Towers! Contrast this with my own and most Americans concern and misgivings about the possible

death of Iraqis as we go to war with that country.

Reading an article in *American Heritage* magazine introduced me to an author who not only has the background to offer valid answers and insights about our dangerous world. He is a brilliant, though controversial, strategic thinker who offers sound advice on U.S. military, foreign, and domestic policy. His name is Ralph Peters, and he retired as a lieutenant colonel from the army in 1998. He has served at the Pentagon, the Executive Office of the President, and visited 50 countries from the Middle East to the former Soviet Union to Southeast Asia. He now writes, lectures, and consults. I purchased and highly recommend two of his books - *Fighting for the Future - Will America Triumph?*, and *Beyond Terror - Strategy in a Changing World*.

The books are mostly collections of essays, some of which in the first book were published before 9/11 (eerily prophetic and provocative!). I'm guessing (and hoping) that President Bush and his top advisors are very familiar with Col. Peters' work. Any American who wishes to better understand those who would not hesitate to kill us if they had the means, and revolutionary strategies for dealing with the threat they pose, should read these two books. I found I couldn't put them down, and consider them essential reading for all Americans to make better decisions at the polls, at home, and at the workplace.

You'll also feel better about being an American, as Col. Peters is adept at analyzing the strengths and marvels of our society, while acknowledging our weaknesses and offering strategies for succeeding against those who would exploit them to destroy us. Things like the American work ethic, the freedom of information dissemination, women in the workplace, the tolerance and socialization of our various religions - things we accept without realizing how unique they are to the planet and how central they are to our power and success as a society. Let me quote a few passages that I hope will whet your appetite enough to motivate a trip down to your favorite book store:

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"While Europe sleepwalks toward a thirty-five hour workweek, we are moving toward the thirty-five hour day. The intense performance of our economy

would be unattainable without the torrent of energy introduced by competitive female job candidates. American women revolutionized the workforce and the workplace. Future social and economic historians will probably judge that the entry of women into our workforce was the factor that broke the stranglehold of American trade unions and

Rub of the Grin

Creative Thinker Finds Ring. Think like a raccoon.

That's what Kenneth Gollihue thought after a crafty raccoon dashed off with a golfer's green tote bag containing snacks and a \$1,200 wedding ring at the Westin Innisbrook golf resort.

Raccoons and squirrels have been known to grab unwatched food and bags along the course north of St. Petersburg. So Gollihue, a veteran groundskeeper at the resort, knew he would have to, think like the pesky varmint if he was to find Helen Hutzler's missing ring.

"On the way home, I know it sounds silly, but I was starting to think, 'What would a raccoon do?'" said Gollihue, 44, of New Port Richey.

The answer: The raccoon would run about 25 feet into a swamp, unzip the bag, and gobble the airline pretzels and sliced apples. It would then leave every thing else behind in the swamp.

And that's exactly where Gollihue found the half-submerged bag during his lunch break Thursday. The snacks were gone, but the ring was there and was returned to Hutzler, who gave Gollihue \$100 for his efforts.

Source: *The State and Local section, Orlando Sentinel February 22, 2003. Reprinted with permission*

gave a new lease on life to those domestic industries able to adapt. American women were the Japanese cars of business-labor relations: better, cheaper, dependable, and they defied the rules. Everybody has had to work harder and smarter to survive, but the results have been a spectacular recovery of economic leadership and soaring national wealth."

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A is for Arsenic

A is for apple, aspirin and arsenic. An apple is a fruit. Aspirin is salicylic acid. Arsenic is a natural element classified as a "heavy metal" in the Periodic Table of Elements found in every chemistry classroom and textbook in the world.

GREEN SIDE UP



Joel Jackson, CGCS

An apple a day purportedly keeps the doctor away. Too many apples and your digestive track may either be set free or bound up depending on your constitution and metabolism.

Take two aspirin to reduce a fever, ease joint pain and prevent serious damage from a heart attack. Swallow too much aspirin too often and you can thin your blood too much and also eat a hole in your stomach lining.

Take some arsenic atoms and combine them with some carbon, hydrogen and oxygen atoms and make MSMA. Dilute it with water and kill some weeds in turfgrass. Mix it in a cup of tea and serve it to some guests and you can write a comedy play

called, "Arsenic and Old Lace." Maybe that's how arsenic came to be known as a poison, and forgotten as a naturally occurring element.

Of course it really depends on how much arsenic was put into the cup of tea, but then let's not quibble about details. It seems only Poison Control Centers at hospitals understand that "dose makes the poison." It has been shown time and again that practically any substance or product abused and used in excess can have negative consequences.

It is obvious that arsenic compounds and other pesticides along with many other substances including cleansers, solvents, petroleum products, and even medicines can have negative effects on human beings. It is how these products are used and how people are exposed to them that define the real risk to human health aside from allergic reactions.

The recent studies coming out of South Florida reporting high levels of arsenic in golf course water and soil samples reflect the total

arsenic and do not differentiate or explain where the arsenic comes from. Since arsenic is on the label of MSMA, then a direct link is inferred. But one study also inferred that 492 metric tons of arsenic was applied to Florida golf courses by simply multiplying the number of golf course (1400) times the average size (150 acres) by an average application of 11.7 lbs of MSMA per acre per year.

What is troubling is that the basic assumption that we apply MSMA to the total acreage of a golf course is incorrect, and thus puts the calculations way off the mark. We may be contributing arsenic to the environment, but let's get the numbers right first. We have responded to those miscalculations.

While the arsenic levels in the samples from South Florida are higher than the threshold levels set by state and federal officials. It is not clear from the studies if the arsenic is bio-available to humans or is just a calculated statistic in a laboratory. There is another whole discussion over background arsenic levels exceeding those threshold numbers in non-golf or non-agricultural lands.

The bottom line is that we need to know if our use of a legal, EPA-approved pesticide is potentially causing a problem of human health concern. EPA will weigh in on the issue soon enough as MSMA is currently under review by the agency.

In the meantime do yourself and your golf club a favor and explore your weed-control programs to see if there are any other products you can use to control your weed problems. Consider changing your pre-emergent herbicide strategies to require less post-emergent control. Do like some clubs and initiate a daily weed hunt where each employee mechanically removes 10 weeds a day. A simple thing like that can add up in savings in the chemical budget and also help the environment.

Even if more data and testing proves the "arsenic and old lace" poison syndrome is incorrect, regulators and politicians may not be able to defend a scientific position, but will have to resort to a political decision to appease the emotional concerns of the public. It happened in the wood-preserved industry. It can happen to the green industry as well.

You can help by calculating how much MSMA you currently use from your pesticide-spraying records and sharing that information with the FGCSA. See your chapter's external vice president for a copy of a confidential survey on MSMA use and send me your information, so researchers and regulators can get a real world handle on the issue.

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"Faith enables, doctrine inhibits. In the true American grain, we are simply casting off that which has failed us. Faithless Europe meanders, while faithful Islam crumbles. We have gained an almost miraculous middle ground. A society that transcends its religious differences without losing its faith is invincible."

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"At present, we are like a police department that ventures out of the station house every four or five years to combat crime for a day. Then, after a bath of rhetoric about no quarter for offenders, we go back inside and shut the door until the criminals again do something so heinous we have to put down our coffee and doughnuts and go back to work."

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"Our great strengths are

wealth and raw power. When we fail to bring those strengths to bear, we contribute to our own defeat. For a superpower to think small - which has been our habit across the last decade, at least - is self-defeating folly. Our response to terrorist acts should make the world gasp."

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"Although tactics may be similar, strategies for dealing with practical versus apocalyptic terrorists can differ widely. Practical terrorists may have legitimate grievances that deserve consideration, although their methods cannot be tolerated. Apocalyptic terrorists, no matter their rhetoric, seek your destruction and must be killed to the last man. The apt metaphor is cancer - you cannot hope for success if you only cut out part of the tumor. For the apocalyptic terrorist, evading your efforts can easily be turned into a public triumph. Our bloodiest successes will create far fewer ter-

rorists and sympathizers than our best-intentioned failures."

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"Never listen to those who warn that ferocity on our part reduces us to the level of the terrorist. That is the argument of the campus, not of the battlefield, and it insults America's service members and the American people."

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"Any society that starves education is a loser. Cultures that do not see inherent value in education are losers. A culture that cannot produce a single world-class university is not going to conquer the world in any sphere. America's universities are triumphant. Once beyond the silly debates (or monologues) in the liberal arts faculties, our knowledge industry has no precedent or peer. Even Europe's most famous universities, on the Rhine or the Seine, are rotting and overcrowded. We attract the best faculty, the best researchers,

and the best student minds from the entire world. This is not a trend subject to reversal; rather, it is self-reinforcing."

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"Perhaps truest of all our cliches is that 'ignorance is bliss.' Men and women do not want to know. They may be pleased to learn of the misfortunes of their neighbor - confessional television shows have their roots in tribal whispers - but they do not want to know that their way of life, of belief, of organizing, learning, producing, and fighting is a noncompetitive bust. The greatest impact of this information age is that it makes the global masses aware of their inadequacy."

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"We are entering a new American century in which we will become still wealthier, culturally more lethal, and increasingly powerful. We will excite hatreds without precedent."