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SPRING  
1994

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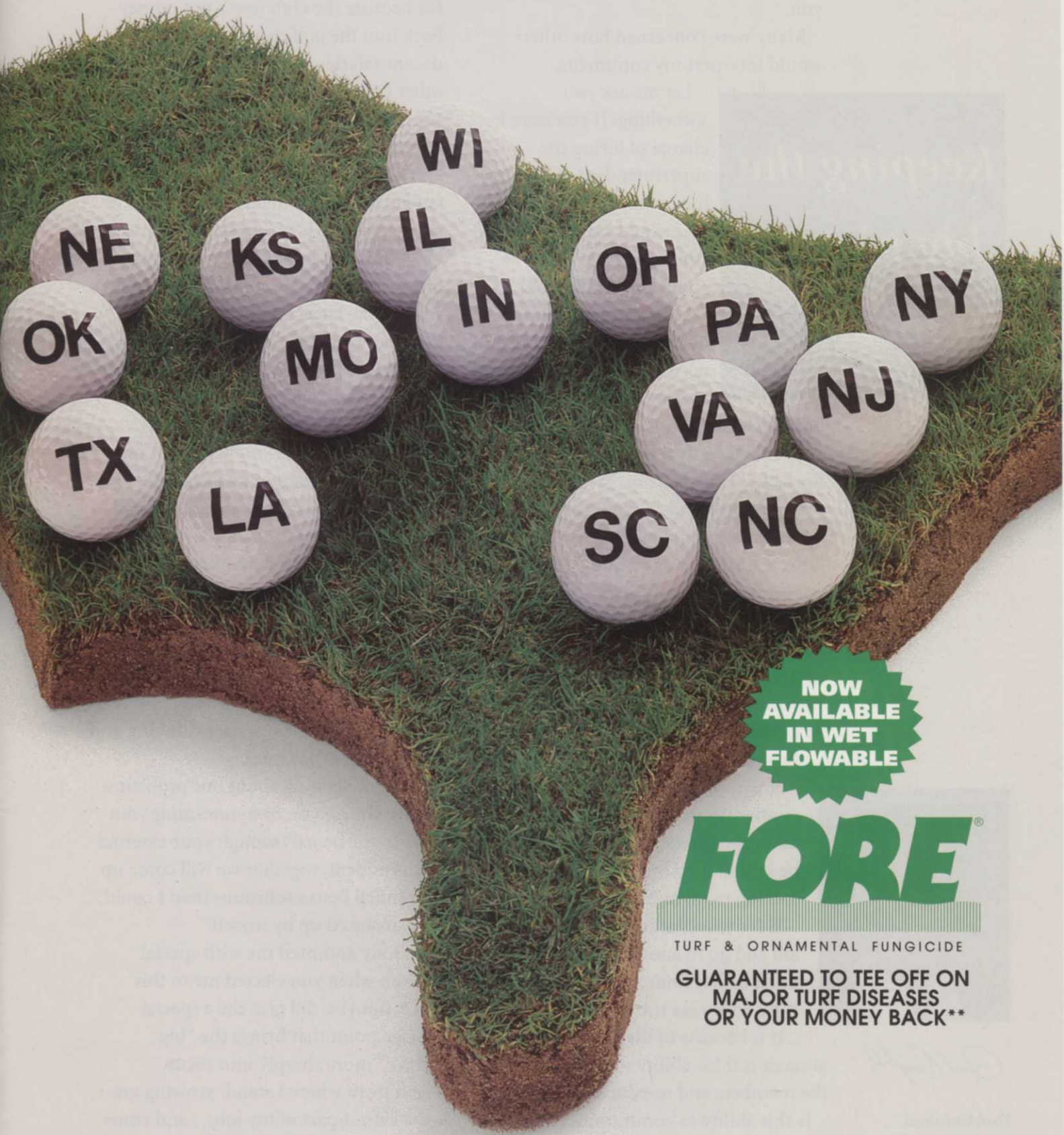
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I received a lot of comments on my last column in the *Florida Green*. I must say, it was great to hear from you.

Many were concerned how others would interpret my comments.

Let me ask you something: If you were in charge of hiring the superintendent at a club, how many do you think you would seriously consider out of those 75 applicants for the job?

I was involved in the hiring process at a club and narrowed the choices down to eight candidates for the

board to consider.

Ironically, only a small percentage of the criteria for selection involved the candidate's ability to grow grass.

I tell many people that "growing grass is the easiest part of my job." I will not go through the litany — we have all seen the list of duties we must perform.

I think the one duty that we often overlook is the ability to communicate with our members and with the board. As a friend says, "We are in the people business."

If you cannot effectively communicate with your members and your greens chairman, you will be in that long line of 75 candidates seeking to fill one vacancy.

Have you ever had a friend leave his job and go to another club where you think he has found the perfect fit? Why do we say the "fit" is perfect?

Is it because of his ability to grow grass or is it his ability to straighten out the members and re-educate them?

Is this ability to communicate innate, or is it something we learn as we go

along... or is it both?

I know of a superintendent who went into a club that nobody wanted to work for because the club never put money back into the golf course, didn't pay decent salaries and generally had all the other qualities that turn professional superintendents off.

Two years later, the club is spending all kinds of money to fix up the course, is paying the superintendent an attractive salary. The job is one of the best in town.

Did this just happen? How many of those 75 candidates are staying current with all the latest environmental information? How many are taking seminars and keeping themselves on top of the latest science and technology in agronomy? How many have taken courses in personnel management or budgeting and fiscal management?

If you were to lay out an educational program for superintendents, do you think we should start emphasizing communication more?

Some of you complained that my last column did not offer any solutions to the problems I raised. I realize that defining the problem is only the first step but it is the first step. At least we are thinking and talking about the issues.

If you are talking about our problems among yourselves, *communicating* your ideas to the board through your external vice president, together we will come up with much better solutions than I could have dreamed up by myself.

Nobody anointed me with special wisdom when you elected me to this office; but you did give me a special vantage point that brings the "big picture" more sharply into focus.

And from where I stand, growing grass is the easiest part of my job... and yours.

# Keeping the 'big picture' in focus



*Paul Crawford*  
Paul Crawford  
President, FGCSA



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Perhaps one of the most relished times of the year for GCSAA members is the GCSAA Show & Conference.

It's a time to learn the newest and best turf information and to network with many friends... a time to recharge the batteries, so to speak, and take back to their clubs fresh ideas to old problems.

The GCSAA puts on a truly progressive conference which sets new attendance levels each year.

An aspect of the annual event is the GCSAA Golf Tournament.

From around the world aspiring golf enthusiasts spend good money to participate and showcase their golfing expertise. It is a well-attended and well-run event which offers not only golf but also a social program and atmosphere that is appealing to the golfing superintendent.

As my friend Ned said, however, "If what you say is true, why are so many of our members wanting a change?"

You see Ned and I go way back and he is the type of person to tell you what's really on his mind. And after you take into account that Ned has played in the last 10 GCSAA tournaments with varying degrees of success, you have to lend some credence to what he's got to say.

"So what's wrong with the tournament?" I ask Ned.

In his deep, Georgian drawl he answered, "It's at the wrong time of the

year. It should be held in the summer or early fall."

He went on to explain his reasoning.

The winter time is a very "iffy" proposition for having decent weather. The conditions, weatherwise, are normally fairly miserable... especially this year in Dallas.

"I mean, why do we have to play the tournament at the worst time of the year?" He asked. "We have great golf courses all over the country which we can play most any time of the year other than winter. We are unfairly limiting our course selections because of the way we do our planning and scheduling."

"Whoa there partner," I said to Ned. "I'll grant you that it is held at the wrong time of the year as far as weather is concerned. Is there anything else?" I asked.

"Yes, as a matter of fact, there is," he replied.

"As far as selecting the best golfer of our association, we also have missed the boat," he continued, offering a lengthy dissertation on the reality of golfing and practicing golf during the months preceding the tournament.

"None of this time period is a period when a superintendent can practice and hone his skills to his best level for competition. Only during the summer and fall months are superintendents actually playing decent golf."

By this time Ned was really starting to open up.

"However, I think the entire tournament format should be changed," he said.

"Well pray tell, Ned, what should we change it to?" I asked.

## *A change for all seasons — the right reasons*

### **Editorial License**



Tom Benefield, CGCS  
Editor



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This was just what Ned had been waiting on as he charged straight ahead with his new ideas on the tournament format.

The heart of his proposal is to run competitions around the country in chapter or local events. The next step was to take local winners — both teams and individuals — to regional events for qualifying to the nationals. The regionals would send (x) number of teams as well as (x) number of individual players based on a percentage of the number of total participants.

“The beauty of this format also,” says Ned, “is that it does not present a major financial burden to individual members as does the tournament we play now. The people who do not move up to the next level of competition will have participated in their GCSAA-sponsored tournament without having incurred a huge expense.

“This would stimulate more involvement by the members: too many people are shut out of the process the way it presently stands.”

I thought to myself a minute.

“Hmmm, ole Ned might be on to something here. What he says sure makes a lot sense.”

I can remember wanting to participate every year myself, but due to time and financial constraints, I have been able to do so only twice. The format and schedule Ned is talking about would definitely allow people like myself to be a part of this event.

The complement of courses available for the tournament, from the first round to the championship, would be tenfold the number now used... or more. The format and qualifying rounds would bring out the best in our member golfers. By the time of the championship, we would have participants who exemplify the best golfers our profession has available: the cream will have been allowed to rise to the top.

The local and regional tournaments could also double as excellent public relations events by generating funds for local charities, addressing local needs and helping the communities. The possibility of success for this type of tournament is tremendous.

From speaking with Ned and other members of the GCSAA — both local and in other states — I know support is out there for this type of event... an event that can spank some life and excitement into an otherwise dismal affair.

Too many of the rank and file feel shut out of this the premier golfing event of their organization. Many of the participants in this event are looking for something different, something progressive and innovative.

Many say it is time for new blood on the tournament committee with fresh ideas. Many say it is time for a “can-do” attitude from the board, tournament committee and, most of all, staff to find a way to do the things the membership wants.

The time has come for a change.

Let's hope the GCSAA officers and directors can understand the need, the desires of their members and the potential for success on several fronts. For it is only through this type of foresight that the association can progress on all fronts.

Until next “May God Bless one and all”.

## Paul Harvey report draws strong response

### Reporter Paul Harvey:

Two years ago you and I talked about the pesticides which were poisoning so many birds that our golf courses faced a silent spring.

I received some indignant responses from greenskeepers and their association and from pesticide manufacturers. They were adamant in their insistence that the stuff they were spraying on fairways and greens were not toxic.

It was and it still is!

Today the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America is holding its annual meeting in Dallas. And a study commissioned by that organization of superintendents is reporting that not only are golf course pesticides killing the birds, but they're killing golf course superintendents also.

Golf course superintendents have a higher incidence of cancer.

The association has to know that this is going to open the door to lawsuits by

golf course workers against their employers for exposing themselves to cancer causing chemicals. A statistical mortality study found among golf course superintendents: more lung cancer, more brain cancer, more cancers of the large intestine and the prostate, especially however, lung cancer.

Doctor Burton Kross, University of Iowa, one of the researchers on this project, recommends further studies and recommends, meanwhile, that golf course workers minimize, however possible, their exposure to pesticides.

There's a moral here which demands to be underscored, “We and the beautiful wild things live in harmony together or we perish together.”

*Lord, Sullivan & Yoder  
Radio News Transcript  
Columbus, Ohio  
WTVN 610 AM  
2/9/94 11:30 a.m.*

February 10, 1994

Mr. Paul Harvey  
333 North Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60601

### Dear Mr. Harvey:

Last evening I received a telephone call from my brother-in-law, a farmer in western Iowa. He heard your radio report this week describing our mortality study of golf course superintendents. He asked me how did our study determine that pesticides were killing birds and humans on golf courses. I knew something was wrong, so I obtained a transcript of your commentary.

Your commentary is inaccurate and misleading with respect to our study. Our study did not collect any data about pesticides and birds. Moreover, as clearly stated in our press release (copy

*Continued on Page 79*