

# Time to hop on board the P&N bandwagon

In a market as heavily regulated as the specialty pesticide industry, it's hard to blame companies for feeling a bit like Marge Schott at an NAACP convention: Paranoid.

With all sorts of environmental groups seeking to limit and sometimes eliminate the use of certain chemicals, manufacturers have naturally taken on something of a siege mentality. With regard to the growing number of states which have instituted mandatory posting and notification regulations, the industry stance against such measures has become counter-productive.

The stance of most chemical company executives is grounded in scientific research — namely, that posting and notification is not necessary. The exorbitant cost and considerable time spent gaining approval through the federal

Environmental Protection Agency should be proof enough that approved chemicals are not harmful — thereby eliminating the need to post warnings on every boundary line.

Unfortunately, this stance — however logical — is running against the tide of public opinion. Twenty-three states have already adopted posting and notification statutes, and more are sure to follow suit.

Efforts to combat this trend (however malodorous and unfair it might be) will come back to haunt the industry down the road. Better to push for a federal, nationwide posting and notification statute which would pre-empt the state and local regulations.

Why? Well, first of all, it's consistent with the industry



Hal Phillips,  
editor

stance on pre-emption with regard to banning certain chemicals. RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) has fought and won these battles, making it a natural choice to lead a standardized posting and notification

crusade.

Second, the chemical industry is tossing money in the coal stove by conforming to the myriad posting and notification statutes across the country. Different signs, different time considerations, different boundary requirements. Wouldn't it be easier, and less expensive, if companies had one standard to which they adhered?

Third and perhaps most important, chemical companies

could turn this whole situation into a public relations bonanza. If the industry took the lead in asking for this type of federal "safety" standard, much wind would be taken from the sails of environmentalists.

Consider the auto industry. Years ago when consumer groups were pushing for seatbelts, car makers fought the initiative tooth and nail. When they finally gave in, the seatbelts were cheap and clearly an afterthought. This one episode gave Ralph Nader & Co. ammunition for decades to come.

However, some in the auto industry have learned their lesson. With airbags now a viable feature, car makers are using them to their marketing advantage. In fact, Chrysler in particular has championed the

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## A few highlights and lowlights from Anaheim, 1993

So much goes unreported from such a major event as the International Golf Course Conference and Show in Anaheim, Calif. Here is just a sampling of my personal remembrances.

**Best analogy:** Golf course designer Robert Trent Jones Jr., speaking at the U.S. Golf Association session the final day, likened course architects to doctors and superintendents to parents.

"We are the doctors of the game. We are present at the creation, advising owners, attending government hearings, making drawings, working with contractors. Our involvement with a course extends for only a couple of years. You folks are often here for a lifetime," Jones

told superintendents.

"Like a good parent, you are often there in the middle of the night when the water line breaks. And you certainly are there for all those early-morning feedings.

"I'm sure I can speak for my fellow architects

here and around the world: The game would not be the same without your love for golf, the playing conditions, and the experience of the fellowship the game provides for millions and millions of golfers through your great efforts."

**Most scary statement:** Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, a man who carries clout in Washington, D.C., spoke of pesticide runoff from golf courses as



Mark Leslie,  
managing editor

being equivalent to that of agriculture. Please tell me our politicians aren't so ill-informed in making legislation. Agh-h-h!

**Best attempt at reconciliation:** Past GCSAA President John Segui of

Waynesborough CC in Berwyn, Pa., gave the invocation at the annual banquet, calling for healing and brotherly love within the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America "despite our differences."

**Best booth entertainment:** Monsanto's master magician expertly, and with humor, weaved a sales pitch for Dimension and Roundup

through his slight of hand and card tricks. Crowds gathered — always. Bright idea, PR folks. Encore.

**Longest lines:** Again, at the Precision Small Engine/Flymo booth. Two years running.

**Most traumatic design statement:** PGA Tour pro and golf course designer Jerry Pate said a famous architect told him that when he designs a course that expects to host a televised event, he always looks back from the green toward the tee to make sure golf cart paths and other aspects of his design won't be seen by viewers. "It startled me," Pate said. "I've always played, and looked at, a course from tee to green."

**Best comedienne:** Without

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## Letters

### REMOVE GOV'T PARTICIPATION

To the Editor:

I read with interest your editorial entitled "Daily Fee Facilities Deserve Level Playing Field (January 1993)" and, while you seem to attempt to serve your title line, the reasoning and conclusions seem to avoid the real issue.

What is that issue? Government has no business being in business of any kind, especially in competition with private enterprise. At issue are matters of risk/reward, special interests, tax exemption/avoidance, accountability and — socialism. Not at issue is the provision of recreational facilities to disadvantaged persons — a social reason — since golfers are among America's more affluent people and government is merely using non-golfer funds to appear benevolent to golfers.

Let me ask a few questions:

Even if government courses charged the same rates as area

daily fees, wouldn't the funds "earned" do nothing more than supplant the real estate and other taxes which would be paid by privately owned facilities? So, where's the benefit for the taxpayers?

If private enterprise can't figure out how to earn a profit with a golf course in a given area, what makes government think it can? Could it be that government has a tool private enterprise doesn't have — the general tax roles? That's why we call them "tax-supported" golf courses, but the taxpayers at large are never told the true results. That's why so many government courses report a "profit." Ignored are the lost real estate and sales taxes, various administrative costs, and debt service hidden in the parks budget rather than being charged to the golf courses themselves.

If government doesn't own and operate bowling alleys, restau-

rants, barber shops, automobile dealers or manufacturers, etc. why does it insist on doing so with golf courses? Once the door is opened to bureaucratic manipulation of taxpayer funds, who knows what field will be next, in the name of the "public interest"? That has been the history of every socialistic country in the world.

In a nutshell, government never has, never can and never will run commercial enterprises efficiently and effectively. They will ALWAYS be used to buy votes through special treatment of some at the expense of others. Therefore, I have no respect for anyone who seeks to obtain taxpayer funding for golf, be it architects, managers, professionals or whomever. And aren't so-called public/private partnerships a wonderful thing? Let's see now, the taxpayers take part of the risk, the golf course builder takes part of the

risk (unless financing is provided by government/taxpayers), and government bureaucrats take part of the profit (if there is any) and pass off the losses to the taxpayers while making all the rules. Great partner! Nothing to lose and everything to gain.

When will we learn that there's no such thing as a free lunch? If architects, managers, professionals, etc. are any good, they'll find ways to design, finance, build and operate golf courses without resorting to the taxpayers at large. If they can't or won't there's either no market or they themselves aren't good enough. We have enough socialism in this country without promoting more in golf so a few can profit at the expense of all.

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