

The classic teamwork slogan, “There is no I in team,” sent the message that WE are all in this together, so quit slacking or showboating and get on the bus with US.

I do a lot of crosswords and word jumbles, so it didn't take long for me to decipher the word “team” and plainly see that there was ME in team.

I'm not saying the message still isn't valid, but the golf industry team at your club and in your state needs a new slogan and a new commitment to teamwork in order to address the multiple water, nutrient and pesticide issues.

“United We Stand” is my choice as the new rallying cry. I know it's not really new. Patrick Henry said it long ago on the eve of the American Revolution. But there's a U (you) and I in united. You and I need to get our act together to raise awareness on golf's contributions environmentally and economically, and send clear and consistent messages to our politicians and regulators at all levels.

The problem is like any preventive treatment or practice on your course. You spend time, effort and money to prevent a problem that doesn't exist YET! Most action groups that form do so out of a circle-the-wagons mentality to fight off a specific attack. I would make the argument that we are already under attack in the case of water restrictions and perceptions about nutrient and pesticide runoff and leaching. We need to unite and create white-paper statements about those issues, which make negative headlines about golf and turfgrass in general time after time.

A few states have made good inroads into uniting the allied associations of golf — Arizona and Georgia come to mind. Florida once created the Florida Golf Council over a taxation issue, but the council dissolved from apathy once the issue was reconciled. There's nothing like a good fight or injustice to pull us together. Again, I remind you that the anti-golf groups, clueless media and pressured politicians have golf and turfgrass in the cross hairs and take shots at us every day.

The Georgia golf associations managed to

U and I Need to Work Together

BY JOEL JACKSON



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unite and rally the troops during the recent drought in 2000 and bring some common sense to the water-restriction process. I read recently that, as the alliance followed up with a Water Conservation Best Management Practices survey to solidify its position and demonstrate stewardship, only 21 of more than 300 surveys had been filled out and returned. It is so easy to lose focus once the crisis has passed. I keep telling you we are being worn down by a lot of little skirmishes that divide and conquer our industry — water use or quality here, pesticide fear there.

The Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association has been flirting with the idea of getting together with the Club Managers Association of America, the golf course owners, the Florida Golf Association and the Professional Golf Association for a sit down and talk about how we can work together on the issues. Well, it's time to ask these folks out on a date and see how it goes. The Golf Industry Show is a start on a broad national level, but local issues like “Save the Bay, Lake or River” will be taking pot shots at golf for fertilizer and pesticide runoff — real or imagined.

Coming soon from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will be Baseline Data Surveys to get a realistic fact-based handle on how we manage our golf courses. Don't ignore these opportunities to document the real facts about golf. They won't be long or tedious to complete. They will be confidential. Superintendents have the data. Owners, pros and general managers have the contacts. This will give us a way that you (U) and I can unite to help our industry.

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