



## THANKS TO TRIED AND TRUE FRIENDS

By Bill Roberts

I answered the telephone one day not too long ago and was on the receiving end of a diatribe which I had hoped would have "breathed it's last" in our profession, but, apparently, not so. The conversation, for lack of better term, went something like this. . .

BR: "SentryWorld. . . Bill Roberts"

Caller: "Mr. William Roberts please"

BR: "Yes, speaking"

Caller: "Mr. William R. Roberts of the SentryWorld Golf Course?"

BR: "That's right, speaking"

Caller: "Mr. Roberts?"

BR: "Yes. . . That's right. . . This is Bill Roberts" (and am I irritated by now or what?)

Caller: "Mr. Roberts, this is Jim Smith from XYZ Supply and from our company to your home we would like to send you and your lovely wife a Presto Coffeemaker for your home" (first of all I have a hard time believing anybody really talks like that and beyond that how does this guy even know I'm married or that I want a coffeemaker since I don't drink the stuff anyway).

"But first, Mr. Roberts, are you interested in solving all your problems with your broadleaf weeds forever?"

(now when did they get to be my weeds?) "Or are you more more interested in a total vegetation kill for your golf course, cemetery, hospital grounds, parks or all of the above? (These guys are great aren't they?)

BR: "Well, my mom didn't raise any fool. . . why don't I become interested in broadleaf weeds forever"?

Caller: "Terrific. . . Now for your initial order of 55 gallons, shipped directly to you at only \$69.00 per gallon you will be rid of your broadleaf weeds forever." (they are still my weeds)

BR: "Well, terrific to you too, but before we do that can you tell me the active ingredient and the percent active ingredient and the cost per thousand?"

Caller: "-----"

BR: "Hello? Did you hear my questions?"

Caller: Well we can ship it in a 30 gallon drum also."

BR: "No, first, did you hear my questions?"

Caller: "Click"

Mine was not, of course, a unique experience but it is one that I find frustrating, particularly when viewed in light of the people who honestly and fairly play such an important role in our industry; our local turf product distributors. We are indeed fortunate in Wisconsin to be served by and to serve with a group who, I believe, are genuinely interested in, not only making a buck (and there is nothing wrong with that) but also in seeing Golf Course Superintendents succeed.

I know I may offend someone through an error of omission and I apologize in advance but I would like to name a few of the individuals who have helped all of us through some tight spots in times gone by. People like Ed Devinger, John Mortimer, Joe Wollner, Dick Evenson, Neil Richter, Ralph Christopherson and Curt Larson and their associates help make it

possible for us to perform.

Our distributors and sales representatives and service technicians introduce us to new products and listen, patiently, to our opinions on the old. They take our orders and process them and deliver needed materials on time. They spend hours setting up demonstrations. They share the information picked up as they travel the state or gleaned as they attend their own product information meetings. They sponsor "turf clinics" and shows. They keep current on the latest management trends. They listen to constructive criticism and, let's face it, on occasion they put up with some pretty unreasonable demands. And they always come through in the end.

Further, we in Wisconsin are, again, fortunate to serve with a pretty progressive group of individuals in that segment of our industry. We have seen them support, both financially and professionally, the efforts of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association, the WGCSA "THE GRASS ROOTS" (without their support this publication does not exist as we've come to know it) and the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association and those organizations' related activities. And they lend that support without expecting a whole lot of conversation about it.

I suspect, however, that they would appreciate a mention and a "thank-you" once in awhile. I just gave them one. You can do the same by saying thanks and supporting them. After all, that's what they have been doing for you.

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