

Golf Industry Needs More Support In Educating Public

By Mark Jarrell

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Recently, I was reminded of an incident that readers should find disturbing.

This true story was told to me several years ago by a golf course manager from an exclusive beachside golf club in the West Palm Beach, Fla., area.

Mr. C., the manager, took a call from a resident in an apartment building fronting the golf course wanting to know if any "chemicals" had recently been applied to the golf course. Several of the apartment residents were having double vision and hallucinations almost every night, usually about the same time the sprinklers were running on the course.

Mr. C. thought for a moment, then answered truthfully that nothing had been recently applied near the buildings in question. The caller then asked if any chemicals were added to the irrigation water that was applied through the sprinklers, and unlike many of us in South Florida who have fertigation systems that inject small quantities of fertilizer into the irrigation water, this club had no such system.

The caller apparently didn't believe Mr. C. A couple of weeks later an inspector from the Florida Department of Agriculture showed up with a television crew in tow. Mr. C's license was checked, his facility thoroughly inspected and he was subjected to an on-camera interrogation. Nothing faulty, incriminating or inappropriate was discovered, so the TV crew departed without apology or conclusion.

Shaken by the ordeal, Mr. C. decided to conduct his own investigation. Combing the area around the apartments, he found some used medical syringes discarded in the hedges between the apartments and the course. He called the police, who conducted another investigation and discovered the cause of the nocturnal hallucinations.

As it turned out, people renting the house next door to the apartments were engaged in illegal drug activities. Residues were found on the pool screens, which indicated large quantities of crack cocaine were being processed and the smoke was drifting up through the open windows of the apartments, causing the residents' altered states.

I was reminded of this story following recent reports about certain LPGA Tour players "suggesting" that chemicals used on golf courses might be the cause of the high incidence of breast cancer among women on the LPGA Tour.

My first reaction was to laugh, but then this sinking, depressed feeling settled in as I thought of the depths to which our chemophobic society has fallen.

I suppose I shouldn't be too upset at the players who made those statements, but I am. People who derive a living from the game of golf should be more responsible about the things they say and do that can hurt the golf industry.

What ever happened to common sense? Did anyone ever check statistics to see if, in fact, there was a higher incidence of breast cancer among LPGA players in comparison to the population at large? Wouldn't it make sense to check the incidence of breast and other cancers among the people who work on golf course maintenance crews, as opposed to those who play golf courses, where the pesticides are applied in highly-diluted

quantities and watered in?

Why point fingers at "chemicals" when science tells us: (a) cancer is the leading cause of death in the U.S., and one of four Americans will die from it, (b) the causes of cancer continue to baffle the best researchers, (c) incidence of breast cancer increased 24.2 percent from 1973 to 1987 and the probable cause is ovarian hormones, and (d) despite the widespread perception that cancer is caused primarily by environmental pollution, evidence is building that the disease is mostly a matter of "personal choice," meaning diet, exercise, tobacco and ultraviolet light are the major causes.

We have so-called "environmental" groups attacking lawns and golf turf as unnecessary and frivolous environmental hazards, despite the preponderance of evidence proving turf's extensive environmental and cultural benefits.

We have regulatory officials in positions of influence over the golf industry, such as David York of the Florida Department of Environmental Regulations, who are guided by prejudices rather than facts on issues such as water consumption and groundwater contamination. We have millions of people whose lifestyle or livelihood revolves around golf, and yet the "golf industry" has no voice in any legislative hall.

When are we ever going to wake up? If you are concerned about golf's future, help support organizations that conduct turf-grass research and development.

North Star Turf Receives Several Awards At IGC Conference

North Star Turf was the proud recipient of several awards recently given at the International Golf Course Conference and Show in New Orleans.

Textron Financial Corporation (TFC) presented North Star with its Top Volume Award. TFC officials said North Star earned the honor by financing a significant number of its Jacobsen equipment sales through TFC. TFC is the financing division of Textron Corporation.

In addition to the financing honor presented by Textron Corporation, North Star was also presented with three awards from Jacobsen Textron Manufacturing.

North Star Turf's strong sales showing in 1991 combined with continued sales growth over the past several years helped North Star earn the distinction as a Jacobsen Textron Distributor of the Year.

For its exceptional work on behalf on their customers, Jacobsen presented North Star Turf with its Distinguished Service Award. The award cited North Star for providing expert technical support, outstanding response to customer needs and timely communication with both customers and Jacobsen.

Jerry Odash, technical sales consultant for North Star Turf, was awarded the Jacobsen Textron Pacesetter Sales Award. Odash was honored for his high sales volume across the full line of Jacobsen turf equipment as well as outstanding service to his customers.

Jacobsen is a major manufacturer of turf care equipment used by professionals worldwide.