

THRU THE GREEN

From The President

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Environmental friendly golf courses are great. But what if you're not an Honor's Course, Spanish Bay, Collier's Reserve, or Squaw Creek? What if you're just Pleasant Golfer Country Club or Small City Municipal Golf Course? What if your members or owners just want a nice golf course, without making a stand on the environment? As a superintendent, what can you do?

Let me share a couple of stories with you. When I first started my current position a few years back, I had a visitor call on me my very first week on the job. He was a neighbor of ours, in fact, he was the president of the local homeowner's association. "Welcome to Peacock Gap," he said. "When are you going to spray our lagoon?" (We share a sixteen-acre lagoon. Actually the course has one par three hole; about 300 feet of shoreline, the homeowners have about fifty homes bordering the other quarter mile or so of shoreline.) Being totally ignorant, I inquired further. I sat back and got a fifteen minute lesson on the history of the lagoon, and his idea of preventive maintenance. It seems, that they had a serious weed and algae problem many years ago. I assured him that I was well qualified to deal with this issue, and that I would go out and survey the lagoon to determine if spraying was indeed necessary.

Shortly thereafter, I took our little motorboat out to check out the situation. Whatever they had done in the past must have worked. The lagoon was dead. Through the sunlight filtered water I could see the dead remains of a few submerged weeds, with a small amount of algae clinging on for dear life. Not a weed was visible, except a few clumps of tules along the shoreline. We spoke every few weeks. "Spray the lagoon," he said, "or we'll have a hell of a problem later this summer." Did he want to hear about IPM? Did he want to hear about tolerance levels? Did he want to hear about a different climate toward chemicals than existed a few years ago? NO WAY. I sensed that the homeowners expected their lagoon to look like the finest filtered waterways in Disneyland.

This whole incident was a real eye opener. Everything I've heard, read, and practiced until now has been geared toward running an environmentally sensitive operation. Did these people care about this? The *not in my back yard* syndrome was alive and well at Peacock Gap. These same people are probably writing letters to the editor about Cal Trans spraying median strips, but

in their lagoon, keep the weeds down at all costs.

We have one small oak-covered hillside adjacent to our second fairway. Each springtime, the questions start coming, when are you going to cut down the tall grass? Uncut perimeter rough might be fine at Sonoma Golf Club or Chardonney, but it doesn't play well at Peacock Gap. It seems that the golfers can't find their ball and it slows play. Am I missing something here? Should I be playing my ball off this hillside as many of them are apparently doing?

I've tried leaving dead branches in out of play areas. It seems that we don't have any out of play areas. How about wildlife on the golf course? Wildlife is fine so long as it's not Canadian Geese. Our golfers are not willing to put up with the mess from geese.

So where does that leave those of us who would like to do our part for the environment? What can we do if our members or owners don't buy into the environmental movement? Check out your own shop. Is everything behind the scene in order? Do you practice IPM? Do you have records to show where your used oil and other fluids go? Can you say that your fertilizer and pesticides stay on the turf and out of the waterways? What do you do with the rinsate from your chemical sprayer and equipment wash area? What do you do with your solid waste? Do you recycle? Do you collect clippings for the dump or do you scatter them on the course?

So you see, even if you won't be competing in any national environmental award competition, there is still much that you can do on your course. Clean up your environment, before you begin to clean up the environment.

Have a great September!
Richard Lavine, CGCS
President

Office Notes

By Barbara Mikel

The California Golf Course Superintendents Association (the state association) has a jobs "hotline" (619-497-5170) for use of members. All of Northern California members are also members of the state association so feel free to use this phone number in addition to our job notices if you are job seeking.

I received a letter from Ken Sakai, CGCS, former President of GCSANC, and former recipient of the Ayrshire Friendship Trophy, for the

(Continued on Page 3)