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Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, 1421 Research Park Dr., Lawrence, KS 66049-3859; (913) 841-2240.

International Society of Arboriculture, P.O. Box 908, Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 328-2032.

International Turfgrass Society, Crop & Soil Environmental Sciences, VPI-SU, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0403; (703) 231-9796.

National Arborist Association, The Meeting Place Mall, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031-1094; (603) 673-3311.

National Golf Foundation, 1150 South U.S. Highway One, Jupiter, FL 33477; (407) 744-6006.

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, 2021 Coffey Rd., Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 292-2601.

PGMS

Professional Grounds Management Society, 10402 Ridgland Rd., Suite 4, Cockeysville, MD 21030; (301) 667-1833.



Professional Lawn Care Association of America, 1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite C-135, Marietta, GA 30068-2112; (404) 977-5222.

Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, 1155 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 296-6085.



Sports Turf Managers Association, P.O. Box 98056, Las Vegas, NV 89193-8056; (702) 739-8052.

Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association, 8500 Normandale Lake Blvd., Suite 1200, Bloomington, MN 55437; (612) 831-8515.

AS WE SEE IT

JERRY ROCHE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Does the public expect too much from its golf courses?

Larry Kassell, the Pacific Northwest's advertising whiz and disseminator of little-known facts, tells us that golfers take an average of 10 million steps per year on the average golf course green. That's about 700 steps per foursome.

Golfers fully expect all golf course superintendents to keep this downtrodden turf healthy and green. They expect this from the first signs of spring until the first snowfall—sometimes beyond.

Not unreasonably, supers wonder if golfers expect too much.

"We have been greatly affected by media presentations of our tournaments," notes William Spence, superintendent at The Country Club in Franklin, Mass.

Spence, speaking at the GCSAA conference, said maybe the time has come for the public to re-evaluate its expectations.

"I worry about the time," he observed, "when somebody comes up with an artificial turf for golf courses. Is the turf we're providing *now* artificial, in and of itself?"

"We're not going to get perfection. That second law of thermodynamics ('as time advances, disorder increases') will get us in the end."

Steve Cadenelli, the 1991 GCSAA president, agrees with Spence's observations—to a point.

"Golf course standards today are near perfection," Cadenelli says. "But they are geared more for appearance than the needs of the plant.

"Our management practices are now being challenged by a fragile environment. Obviously, things must change. New standards...more in tune with practical and economic realities...must be developed."

Spence and Cadenelli both agree that there's a problem, and it could be getting worse. The solution may be to change public expectations about the look of our nation's golf courses.

"I don't think we relinquish all control and turn over our GCSAA cards to Mother Nature, though," Spence contends. "An

occasional blemish or randomness should not be criticized—just recognized."

Cadenelli's reference to "economic realities," with the recent news from the *New York Times*, really hits home. According to the *Times*, "at least 10 percent of 2,600 residential developments centered on golf courses are in some sort of financial distress."

This puts maintenance dollars—most particularly for those golf courses in struggling residential developments—in jeopardy.

If superintendents are *forced* to cut costs, the golfing public may be *forced* to change its expectations concerning the appearance of golf courses.

"In the future, management inputs will change drastically," Cadenelli contends. "The decision-making process will become increasingly complex, and the future of the game will depend on the superintendent's ability to make solid decisions."

Cadenelli defines quality as species plus input plus technology times the ability of the golf course manager. What he's really saying is that, if input decreases, species or technology or the manager's ability must increase to keep the same quality.

Or, there's the "Spence Alternative" (sounds like a Ludlum book, doesn't it?): educate the public, help golfers accept lower standards that are more compatible with current environmental and financial considerations.

Which will it be? Either way, as Cadenelli says, "The professional golf course manager *must* face the new world with new thinking."