I have never been so pumped as I am now, especially when I look ahead to the decade of the '90s. In my opinion the future holds such great promise it would be pretty hard to screw it up.

With the demand for golf increasing, we will be hard put to take care of all the people that want to play. With a more affluent country and more leisure time all sports both spectator and participant will continue to grow. With pressure being brought to bear on homeowners to cut down the size of their lawns because of water shortages, more of our citizens will be using our parks. So all in all, the institutional segment of the market is growing by leaps and bounds.

We are going to need trained personnel to take care of the facilities that we now have and that will come on board in the near future. The problem we all face is substance abuse in the workplace. It is not something that is coming, it is already here. We have to learn to recognize the symptoms and somehow, try to get those addicted rehabilitated. Alcohol and drug abuse are more common in the work force than we really want to believe and accept. It is the responsibility of all of us to report those abusers. Shielding them does not make you a good guy. The sooner this use gets rehabilitated, the sooner he can come back clean. More importantly, would you really take a chance with another person's life because someone on your crew was drunk or high on drugs and could not respond to a call for help? Would you shield this guy if your life depended on it?

Substance abuse in the workplace costs employers in this country billions of dollars a year. It is one thing to cost you money, it is another to cost a life.

Serious...you bet it is serious. In today's environment even casual users are a liability. Many astute employers are beginning to recognize substance abuse. Some are putting forth a major effort to gain control of it. Others have begun programs, while still others are having applicants take a test to see if they are clean. Some are testing all their employees on a regular basis.

None of us can afford to be lax in this area. We cannot stick our heads in the sand and say, "I don't have this problem." We all have the problem it is just a matter of degree. It is our responsibility to see that the crews we send out in the field are clean. Enough accidents happen without pushing up the odds.

I probably was more naive about substance abuse than anyone. For some reason I felt I had a good handle on people. I could pick out a user from the crowd. Well, I hate to admit it but I can't. It goes far beyond what I can tell by talking, with someone. I can tell you that we had that problem and it cost us dearly in mistakes, lies, time and money.

Users will do anything to get the money to buy what they need. If they are using it in the workplace and accidents happen our workmen's compensation rate will skyrocket. Budgets will have to be increased to allow for the additional costs, or budgets will be cut and we will be forced to lay off people because of it.

This industry is capable of using every trained person who applies for a position. It is our obligation to either weed out those substance abusers or get them rehabilitated. For the safety of everyone in our industry, we owe it to ourselves.