PARTING SHOTS

GOTTA BELIEVE

As long as he doesn't plan to hang on classes, mostly enjoying life on campus. And, like most, he really doesn't have a specific career in mind yet. He's trying different classes and seeing what appeals to him and hoping to find that one thing he's really passionate about. As long as he doesn't plan to hang around in college for seven years, I'm totally cool with him being a bit directionless. How many 20-year-olds legitimately know what they want to do with their life?

Last summer, the nice folks at the Cleveland Metroparks Golf Division were desperate enough for extra labor that they hired him to work at their cluster of courses on the west side of town. He actually took to it like a pig to slop. They had him mowing greens on a triplex a week after he started (which I told him would have been highly unlikely up the street at one of the local private clubs). He loved the outdoors aspect of it and seemed to really enjoy the responsibility and solitude of setting up the little executive course they operate all by himself. Hmmm...maybe this is his passion.

I tried to ignore the fact that he was being paid extra labor only because I've heard those same words a hundred times from superintendents around the world who feel just like you do. But...and it's a huge, enormous, massive "but"...if you are truly PASSIONATE about protecting, preserving and enhancing these wonderful playing fields and you wake up every day excited about the prospect of making your course a little better, you should absolutely do it. It's a lifestyle that has many rewards: a sense of accomplishment every day, beauty all around you, a feeling that you're giving enjoyment to others and an amazing spirit of camaraderie with thousands of other superintendents around the world who feel just like you do.

So, my advice to my son - or any young person thinking about jumping on this wild merry-go-round of a business - would be to look deep inside yourself and ask, "Do I love this so much that I'm willing to live this lifestyle forever?" Unless you absolutely believe that, don't do it.

But if you do believe - down to the very core of your soul - welcome to the best profession in the world. GCI