



Dan Anderson

7his article is being written during the last couple days of June. What a weird month this has been. June started out with a two-week blast of heat and humidity, then comes a record low. The record was 123 years old. After more heat, we are now in our second cold front of the month. Finally, some time to catch my breath (and time to write this article).

Last fall, I started going back to school to get an MBA. I've already finished two management courses, but my progress is not the subject matter here. I am going to try to articulate some of my thoughts and discoveries on work and education, especially in terms of how they relate to the past and how I see them in the future.

It used to be that if you gave great effort, you were rewarded with job security. That no longer is true. We have shifted from "lifetime employment" to "lifetime employability." You may ask, what is the difference? The difference is that what used to be a lifetime job is now just an opportunity to work. Years of faithful service can be meaningless. Our employers

constantly ask, "Is he/she employable?" Has the superintendent grown enough to take advantage of new technologies, research, chemicals and equipment? Is the superintendent a liability or an asset? Let's hope for the latter.

Here I must give credit to all greenkeepers and superintendents, and those striving to become one. Our profession has always embraced education. Whether through formal training, networking or socializing, this profession has continually looked to do the job cheaper, faster or better. We constantly strive to improve. We are very seldom satisfied and we are our own worst critics. This will serve us well in the future if we maintain these work and learning ethics.

Why do we do this? It's not because we're overpaid, over-appreciated and underworked; quite the contrary. It's because we have great pride in ourselves and our work.

I decided to get into this business after reading an article written by a superintendent that was among the literature in my high school counselor's office. The superintendent explained his feelings about being one—his love for nature, and the joy of being able to see the dawning of each new day at his course. This man had great pride. Being a superintendent wasn't about a job for money, it was about a job he loved: about a job where he constantly strove to improve course conditions while educating himself in his trade.

Today, we are lucky to have so many educational opportunities available. I doubt you need me to list any, but here are some options:

- National association meetings, seminars, books, videos, etc.
- Local association meetings, seminars, outings
- Turf schools' short courses
- The Internet
- Colleges and junior colleges
- Trade publications
- Playing another golf course
- Social gatherings with your peers

Don't underestimate the last two, either; many times I have found that I have learned some of the most valuable information in an informal setting. An old friend once told me, "The day you stop learning, you might as well be dead;" though I don't totally agree with him, he does have a point. Life is a continuous learning process. So if you're interested in some fun, learning and socializing, I look forward to seeing you at our next meetings, at the Odyssey Club on August 17 and at Bull Valley on September 13. As Golf Committee chairman, I would like to thank all the volunteers, including the hosting superintendents and their staff. They are the reason we can host our events—and offer formal and informal educational opportunities. 