

ASSISTED FROM THE CLASS C  
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# People of Our Industry

*I love this industry and am so enthusiastic about continuing to learn more and more. Despite my eagerness, I like to consider myself a laid-back guy, and I think my friends would agree. As a new kid on the block, I enjoy hearing the stories of the "Good Old Days" from superintendents, vendors, members, and even owners. This is an integral part of the learning process. Many of these stories are so incredible that it's hard to believe them myself. Yet, no matter how far-fetched the stories can get over time, they always bring a smile to my face (especially because one day I will be the one telling them!).*

When reminiscing with others about the "Good Old Days" it always comes down to the people in the story. Turf industry folks can relate to these types of experiences. I think it is the people in our industry that make our jobs so meaningful and fun. We relate to each other, and we care when something doesn't work out for another individual in our field.

Recently I was at an assistants' workshop at Exmoor Country Club and had the opportunity to share stories with some of my colleagues. Not only did we talk about past golf seasons, but we also shared how much we have learned from our current superintendents. It doesn't stop there, though, because we have all worked at a number of different courses around the U.S. Sharing in the knowledge from this small group made me start to think out of the box a little bit. Yes we mow greens, tees, fairways, and so on, but it is the small details that the golfer often notices. We use these stories to break the ice layer off our outer shell to show who we really are. And most importantly, as assistants we finally got to make some stories of our own.

Other professionals in the turf industry agree: we are extremely fortunate compared to other industries. We can count on one another for help. As an example of our camaraderie: if one of your greens, tees, or fairways were problematic, you would have no trouble receiving advice and assistance from another superintendent or plant pathologist. This could save your job if the problem were severe enough. In other industries, that kind of help and friendship does not always go hand in hand. What other profession can you think of where you give a helping hand to the competition down the street?



People who have been in the industry for a long time can remember never missing a superintendents meeting. Now it seems the camaraderie from the "Good Old Days" is at risk. Whether it is due to the great pressures of changing expectations and demands, or fear of leaving the course for more than a few hours, or just wanting to spend more time with your family, our unique social network is in jeopardy. We new kids on the block learn as much from these social experiences as we did from our text books. It's important for us to have mentors not

only on the course, but off the course as well. Let's face it, these relationships help us to be the mentors for tomorrow's generation. I chose this industry because I saw a great potential to meet distinguished people and have a tight group of friends that I could always count on. I was fortunate to grow up around this industry. I was exposed at a young age to hard-working, committed, and fun individuals.

Some final thoughts in these tough and ever-changing times: no matter where you stand in the turf industry it is important to stay positive. Our attitudes and philosophies define who we are. In times like this we need each other's help more than ever to succeed. To build for a great future we need to think about our unique pasts going back decades and decades, even centuries at this point! Equally important is sharing that positive attitude with the people around you. It's the joking around and the smiling faces that other people like to see, because they reflect how deep our passion is for this industry. After all, in our industry, it is the people that make it great (and of course our stories!). **-OC**