

A funny thing happened on the way to my 55th birthday this past November. I kept tripping over my career path.

The only thing I could see in the beam of my golf cart headlights were mower tracks and armadillo trails in the dew. They led to 10 more years of chasing sunrises before detouring into the Social Security office. After 20 years of mowing and going at the Walt Disney Company, I thought it was time to consider

other adventures to pursue before Medicare kicks in.

Effective December 31, yours truly terminated his employment for the purpose of starting a pension. That's legalese for "Joel's taking early retirement!"

Previously, I balanced my day job and my association service like

the rest of the superintendents across the state. I struggled like everyone else to find the time to do justice to it all.

Time is such an issue that it moved both Joe Ondo and Mike Perham to write about how much time could theoretically be spent to support our many events throughout the state. The now-infamous list of 27 opportunities for conferences, meetings, seminars, tournaments, trade shows, demonstrations, research updates and other fund-raisers was an interesting exercise to illustrate a point.

Why the list?

At the FGCSA Planning Session we were discussing the subject of dwindling participation for some of our state and local events — including the 1997 FTGA Conference and Show

— and what to do about it.

This topic has come up before. Everyone keeps saying there are so many things to choose from these days. I wanted to put it down in black and white to get a real handle on it. All these functions are worthwhile! They just have the annoying requirement of taking time to plan, execute and attend.

I don't expect any superintendent actually spent 40 days away at these functions because some are very local events. The point is there are a lot of opportunities and they take up our time and resources. It may be time to reevaluate how we market these events and try to expand our audience to increase participation and financial support. Those kinds of issues were also addressed at the Planning Session.

Well, there's a message in here somewhere. It's about changes and challenges and choices. Over these past 20 years of inhaling pixie dust and having to admit to family and friends that, indeed, I did work for a mouse, I managed to have lots of fun and satisfaction in working on the *Florida Green* magazine as a sideline. People would often say, "I don't know how do you find the time to do it!"

Truthfully, it has been so rewarding I thought it might be time to follow an old dusty dream of mine of writing for a living.

The association is also discussing changes it would like to make to accomplish some of the goals that were identified at the Planning Session. Ironically, some of these current goals are similar to ones that were identified by former Long Range Planning Committees. They have been sitting idle on the back burner gathering dust for over a decade.

Whenever there's change, there are challenges to be met and choices to be made. Maybe we need to get a Dust Buster to make those dreams and plans come true! I'd be willing to give it a try. After all, now I've got the time!



Green Side Up



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