

CATFISHED

Backwards readers (that means you Cozette Hadley) will already know that my back-page column addresses the recent positive use of social media by Tim Moraghan. Here, I'll briefly take on a not-so-positive thing that also happened on Twitter recently.

Without going into endless details, we got collectively "catfished" last month. In short, someone created a fake online identity and pretended to be a superintendent. He was pretty adept at it and it went on for months. The imposter even created a fake wife, fake turf problems and fake celebrations. He was found out when chapter leaders and others in his purported home state started wondering who the hell this guy was. He was busted.

A couple of our most thoughtful social-media-savvy superintendents, Greg Shaffer and Andrew Hardy, wrote about the whole sad saga over on our website but the bottom line is we were had and people reacted in a variety of ways. Some were embarrassed, some were angry, some were amused and some said they'd been on to him the whole time.

I knew the guy's handle and may have in-

teracted with him a little, but wasn't nearly as connected to the guy as Greg, Andrew and a bunch of others. So I didn't have a sense of betrayal. It didn't even really piss me off.

Instead, I felt a little sad that our collective naïveté was taken. "Till now, there'd been a kind of "we're-all-in-this-together" spirit among the turfheads who are most active on social media. After all, Twitter has created sort of a new, global version of the local chapter. Ideas are constantly shared, as are opinions, bad jokes and the occasional tacky comment. Most importantly, friendships are made and bonds are formed.

So, this sordid little episode happened to the fraternity only because they are a fraternity. The same culture of fellowship that makes this such a great profession also makes it vulnerable to something like this because we welcome others so readily.

Personally, I think getting catfished is a small price to pay for the camaraderie we enjoy in our industry. I hope it won't deter anyone from joining in or from continuing to enjoy all the amazing benefits social media offers to us. It's a cautionary tale but not a reason to opt out. **GCI**



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A quick note of apology about the mess that appeared in this space last month. We screwed up and managed to reprint a chunk of a previous month's column on top of it. The correct version of the column is on our website in the July issue section.