

**A**s the baby boomer generation begins to phase out and burn out from superintendent positions on golf courses and association boards, I'm hoping there are enough dedicated and motivated members of the so-called Generations X and Y to fill the voids, especially when it comes to volunteer service in our professional associations.

I have no doubt there will be plenty of bodies to fill the jobs on golf courses, but I feel like the generation gap for association service isn't being bridged as well as it should, and I wonder if the younger generations "get it."

The image, salaries and respect that superintendents have today is not a product of the benevolence and insight of course owners, members, managers or golf professionals. It is because superintendents formed local, state and national associations and volunteered their time to address issues that were professional, educational and political. This proud history of growth and accomplishment often gets lost in the hustle and bustle of today's world.

The mere sharing of knowledge at meetings and conferences was a giant leap, but perhaps even more important was the networking and friendships that bound them together. That takes participation, and unfortunately, local chapters across the nation are suffering from poor participation.

Ladies and gentlemen of the younger generation, we have had our glory days. We have been founders, caretakers and innovators to move the superintendent's profession forward; now it is your time to step up and keep the momentum going. For as surely as you don't get engaged, the role and effectiveness of the superintendent will suffer unless strong leaders with vision and determination are willing to volunteer their time and energy.

The good news is that with technology, Web casting and video conferencing, the need to be away from your jobs is diminishing. You can participate and offer insight and leadership to the profession without leaving your office. The amazing fact is that the old guard drove hundreds of miles round trip to attend meetings that built associations and relationships

## Time for Gen X-ers to Take Charge

BY JOEL JACKSON



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that changed the face of golf course management and the superintendent's profession.

Just like today's golf touring pros owe a debt of gratitude to Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player, so do young superintendents owe a similar debt to the founders of the 103 local chapters around the country and those who have kept those chapters functioning and providing leadership on issues ranging from local turf disasters to fighting for fair and reasonable rules and regulations on water use and pest management.

I see glimmers of hope in a few faces of young men and women who appreciate what has been done to bring the profession to its current prominence. But as those who follow us deal with more and more demands on their personal time and space in this modern world, local chapters need to identify, educate and mentor our successors today to protect the profession for tomorrow. There is plenty of responsibility to be shared by all.

As the time crunch envelopes us all, those chapters that retain some sort of administrative help to do mailings, dues collecting and other necessary paperwork will be better suited for growth and survival and the recruitment of new board members.

Association participation and leadership should be all about vision, strategic thinking and accomplishing worthwhile goals for the good of all members and not about stuffing envelopes and collecting registration money. We need young blood to keep the profession healthy, strong and vital to the game of golf.

Young superintendents, I challenge you to step up. Older superintendents, I challenge you to give them a seat at the table.

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