

The Golf Industry Show is a grind. People are running here, there and everywhere. That said, the show is a ton of fun. My favorite part of the event is catching up with folks I haven't seen in awhile. I also like meeting new faces.

Inevitably, I always take something away from observing and listening to the people with whom I converse. I'd like to tell you about some individuals I spent time with at the show who made a big enough impression on me that I was telling myself, "I need to start working on being more like him as soon as I get home."

First, there's Mark Kuhns, the certified superintendent at Baltusrol Golf Club. Kuhns gave a talk on interseeding at a breakfast sponsored by T-2-Green. Kuhns stated he thought anthracnose could be used as a cultural tool in some regions of the country to control *Poa annua* on greens. At first, I thought someone had spiked his orange juice. But when Kuhns explained his philosophy behind his thinking — that there's a window of time where the anthracnose will weaken the *Poa* before it weakens the bentgrass — it all made sense.

I realized in this instance that the veteran had tapped his knowledge to think out of the box about how to handle a turf problem. It also struck me that Kuhns was willing to take a risk by letting the anthracnose go for a few days.

In essence, Kuhns had a hunch and he played on it. The take-home message to me was to have the guts to play a hunch once in awhile. That's how you learn.

I also spent some time with Gregg Breningmeyer, director of sales and marketing for John Deere Golf & Turf One Source. Every time I see him, Breningmeyer is more upbeat than Dick Vitale during Final Four weekend. His optimism also has a way of rubbing off on you.

Breningmeyer and I talked about the state of the economy. I must admit that all of the negative news about the roller-coaster stock market, high gas prices and the mortgage meltdown has soured my outlook on the country's

Taking Home Some Sound Advice

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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financial state. But Breningmeyer helped me see the light. He told me people are talking themselves into a recession because they're getting hammered over the head that bad times are upon us. He has a point.

"Economies go up and down in cycles," Breningmeyer said. "But there is nothing fundamentally wrong with this economy. Nothing!"

Breningmeyer said the high price of gas may not be such a bad thing because we need to become more self-reliant on our energy needs. Of the housing crisis, he said: "Everybody is panicking about it. The other side of that is that it's a great time to buy" because of lowering prices and great interest rates.

Breningmeyer gave me a take-home message that made me smile: I'm going to purchase that flat-screen TV I've had my eye on the past few months.

I also ran into Dave Downing, the vice president of operations/construction for Signature Golf Group and the new president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Downing gave a short speech during the President's Reception on Friday night. During his talk, Downing acknowledged his wife, Jo, GCSAA Past President Ricky Heine and outgoing GCSAA CEO Steve Mona by asking the audience — on separate occasions — to give them a round of applause.

In doing this, Downing seemed to set the tone for his presidency. His reign won't be over others — it will be *about* others.

Downing's take-home message for me and the others in the audience was obvious. So often we have to tell ourselves, "It's not about me."

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