

# From the Back Tees

■ OPINION

**W**hen I hear about the waning attendance and participation at chapter meetings and industry events, I get concerned about the camaraderie and vitality of our associations.

Members also don't hang around after meetings, shoot the bull or go out to dinner together like before. It's too bad — I think golf course superintendents deserve more regular nights out together.

I know it's tough to balance work and family, and I know that family comes first. But everyone, including spouses, needs more personal down time to relax. So having a night out once in awhile shouldn't be a guilt trip for anyone.

We find ourselves in a multi-tasking, media-blitzed information age. Folks need to have some time and space for themselves. Kids don't stick around forever and once you find yourself in an empty nest, it would be nice to have a network of friends and activities.

My wife and I only have one child — our daughter Jennifer. But we did all the stuff parents do, like providing transportation to baton, dance and piano lessons as well as YMCA Indian Princesses and Rifle Corps in high school band. We attended recitals, parades and every Friday night football game for four years. You know the drill if you are a supportive parent.

Good times. Good fun. Excitement in competitions. But there was this other thing I also had going. I was involved with my local superintendents' chapter, and almost once each month, with a few exceptions like the GCSAA conference or Florida Turfgrass Conference, we had chapter meetings. Even those were opportunities to get away from the daily routine and be exposed to new people, experiences and ideas to energize the mind.

You know the monthly agenda — business meeting, education, lunch and golf. Sometimes after golf a few of us would go out to dinner and wait out the rush-hour traffic. It was time to just be with friends and peers. We'd have some shop talk, sports talk, a few beers and a few laughs.

## Boys' and Girls' Nights Out

BY JOEL JACKSON



IT'S NOT SELFISH  
FOR PARENTS  
TO HAVE THEIR OWN  
TIME OR HOBBIES  
TO PURSUE

Nowadays, I seldom see folks hanging out after meetings. I hear about a few foursomes around the state that play on Friday afternoons rotating among their courses to talk about work and their golf games.

I know times are always changing, but I see kids so over scheduled with activities that Mom and Dad or the kids have little time for just simple fun and relaxation, and I don't mean video games. Get outside and explore. Learn how to find which way is north without a GPS.

It's not selfish for parents to have their own time or hobbies to pursue, even if it's to be alone in a boat or on a pier fishing or golfing with pals or a book club meeting. I think it's healthy for mom and dad to get away for a break now and then.

When I was a kid, we used to play a lot of pickup games of touch football, cork ball, flies and grounders, tag, hide and seek — all in the yard or side street. We didn't have to have travel teams going to other cities or now even other states to compete and have fun. That takes time and money, and time isn't something you can save up. If play dates are so good for Junior and Sissy then what about for Mom and Dad?

Lord knows kids will get enough regimentation in school, and hopefully in service for their country and the business world. Mom and Dad have had that same regimentation, now they deserve a little time to goof around doing what they like to do.

Just remember if you do get to enjoy some more "Boys' or Girls' Days or Nights Out," play responsibly and look both ways before crossing the street.

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