



“Even though it feels like I’m locked in an eternally futile superintendent job search, I would much rather be doing this job than anything else.”

**MATT NEFF**, *assistant superintendent, Wedgewood G&CC, Powell, Ohio*

## The year-ender

As 2013 comes to a close, I’ve recently found myself reflecting on the year on both a personal and professional level. How about that for a completely stereotypical opening to a December column? They probably teach that on the first day of Year-End Column Writing 101, which I’m pretty sure is a required course in every college Journalism program.

Then again, maybe not. This is probably going to come as a huge shock to my readers (which I estimate to be at least seven people — not to brag), but I’ve never even taken a Journalism class, so I could be wrong about that.

Anyway, I seriously have been looking back over things that have happened this year, both in my personal life and at work. I’ll spare you the personal revelations — not that I actually had any, but I’ll pretend that I did so I don’t seem shallow. However, the job related stuff is definitely fair game and there are three things that I find myself thinking about the most.

I was again reminded that this has to be one of the greatest professions on earth both because of the job itself and the people who do it.

It’s the confluence of sev-

eral things I, and probably most of you, love: golf, science, problem solving, working and being outside. As cliché as it is, it really is hard to beat seeing the sun rise over the amazing landscape that we have the opportunity to maintain and improve every day and being able to look back at the end of the day and see the tangible results of our efforts.

Even though it feels like I’m locked in an eternally futile superintendent job search, I would much rather be doing this job than literally anything else (OK, with the possible exception of playing for the Cleveland Indians. The allure of 60+ hour weeks for way less money proved too strong to pass up.)

I’ve also given a lot of thought to writing this column this year and what has come from it. It has given

me the chance to correspond with people I likely never would’ve crossed paths with otherwise and I have learned quite a bit both from those interactions and from the research I did for a few columns. There are some really great people in this business who, despite being in the midst of a hectic golf season and, in one case, two weeks out from hosting a major, still took the time to shoot me an e-mail about a column they enjoyed. It honestly blew me away.

Probably the most striking thing I realized this year is the effect this job can sometimes have on your family. The hours and the unpredictability of this business can make the tough job of raising kids even tougher.

Before my wife and I had kids, I never really gave a second thought to how much I

worked and she was probably more than happy to have me and my idea of “funny” out of her hair for extended periods of time. Added bonus: built-in excuse to dodge in-law visits and going to weddings.

But now, with two little ones running around, it’s a completely different ballgame. Many of us have seen bosses or co-workers deal with this issue when we were younger, but until you experience it for yourself, you really can’t understand what it’s all about.

In addition to working full-time, I know how much extra work at home my wife has to take on during the season because of my work schedule. I am unbelievably grateful that she is willing to do so because she understands how much I love my job and the commitment it takes to do it. The spouses of people in this business, especially those with kids, work just as much, if not more, than we do. I don’t think it’s a stretch to say they are the unsung heroes of golf course maintenance.

I guess the overarching theme to all this is that I’m very fortunate to have an awesome family and a great job in the best business on earth. Keeping this in mind certainly helps to put the bad days and the occasional setbacks in perspective.

And I was only kidding about dodging both in-law visits and weddings. It’s just rude to bail on someone’s wedding.

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