



Feelings on Leaving

By Tom Salaiz

As I sit here in front of my computer thinking of what to write in my last article for *The Grass Roots*, feelings of regret, pride, anticipation, and sadness dominate my thoughts all at the same time.

With each change in my life, I have felt similar feelings of anticipation and sadness.

When I first left home to go to Texas A&M, I felt pure excitement and a little nervous. Being the first one in the family to leave the house, I also felt somewhat proud of that. I wasn't too sad about leaving my family because I was still in Texas (although 12 hours away!) and I knew I would be back during the holidays and summer vacations.

Leaving Texas A&M and my family to go pursue graduate work at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, however, was not as easy. That same excitement about the future was still there, but now I was leaving behind very close friends from college and my family at home in El Paso which I knew now I would visit only during holidays or other special occasions. It was a little more difficult to move to Nebraska.

Then I finished my master's work at Nebraska and I was on my way to Wisconsin to begin working at the Noer Facility. That was probably the easiest move to make. Although I could have stayed on as a research technician on a temporary project at Nebraska, the option to accept the position here at the UW was easily the better one for me. Graduate students are expected to either continue on for a higher degree or find suitable work. I left friends behind at Nebraska along with my close advisors, but we will continue to collaborate in the future on research projects and at national meetings.

Now I am making yet another change in my life and a big move across the country.

My feelings on leaving Wisconsin are mixed, but they are very positive as well. My fiancée, Pam, and I strongly feel that at this point in our careers, it is important to follow her career as a Ph.D. in agricultural field research, while I continue to gain additional experience in the turfgrass industry and research. Leaving my position was a difficult decision for both of us to make, but one we feel is practical considering the circumstances.

I regret the fact that by leaving my position as manager of the Noer Facility I will miss out on seeing the turfgrass program grow to its fullest potential. This is probably the most difficult thing for me to accept, but at the same time, I feel good about the status of the turfgrass program. With Dr. Frank Rossi and Dr. Julie Meyer on board, the turfgrass team is ready to roll.

Yes, I will miss out on this period of exponential growth for the turfgrass program, but I am proud to have been the first manager of the Noer Facility. I revel in the fact that I will be able to visit the research center in the future and see projects and policies which I initiated still in place (and I am sure there will be many).

I look forward with great anticipation to my future in Idaho with Pam. As of this writing, several job prospects look promising but nothing is definite yet. The job uncertainty is a little scary, but challenging. Pam and I are eager to take this challenge head on and begin the rest of our lives together. We are getting married on January 9 and will be moving to Meridian, Idaho shortly afterwards.

It has truly been a joy working for the turfgrass industry and the University for a turfgrass program ready to burst at the seams. I am proud to have been the first manager of the Noer Facility and look forward to visiting in the future. 🌱

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