



"Where have all the Old Timers Gone?"

By Mark Kienert



It was the last time we played golf at Lawsonia when I first heard the phrase, "where are all the 'old' superintendents?" The words were directed toward the group I was with and came from a saleswoman, whom, when looking around the room, was surprised at the relative young age of those attending.

As you know, this is a young man's occupation. A demographic survey I reviewed listed the average age of a golf course superintendent in the United States as 38. (This is one year older than the similar survey conducted two years previously.) This I'm sure has to do with the marching toward retirement of the "baby boomers."

But as I look over a group attending one of our monthly meetings, I cannot help noticing the youth of our group. So many new and unfamiliar faces are present at today's association gatherings. There was a time that I knew everyone by name. People know me by name because of my presidency, and all the while I'm at a loss knowing who they are.

I am reminded and sometimes haunted by my recollection of a conversation I had with the late Bill Sell and his playing partner of the day, Mr. Irv Johnson. Earlier in my career, when I found time and actually enjoyed knocking the cover off a golf ball, I would make it a point to play golf with a new group of WGCSA members at every meeting I was able to attend with the thoughts of learning as much as I could. I recall a question I put to them as we walked up the eighteenth fairway at the Bull's Eye Country Club, a club that I would one day call home. It was there that I asked both if they had to do it all over again, would they choose to become golf course superintendents. Without a moment's hesitation, both answered me simultaneously, NO! They weren't kidding.

What shocked me was how rapid and convincing their words were. It wasn't quite the response that I wanted to hear nor expected to hear, especially since I had graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison just three years earlier. It does sadly remind me of the fact that two of the four superintendents I wish to call mentors are no longer employed as golf course superintendents.

So now it is my turn to fade into the background. It was at this point that I was going to insert some startling statistics as to the time and miles I spent behind the wheel traveling to board of directors' meetings and WGCSA monthly meetings. I choose not to because I do not wish to leave a negative impression on anyone considering running for the board. I must thank the members of the Bull's Eye Country Club for allowing the privilege to serve in various capacities.

I feel I have grown and matured. I have been asked why I ran for the board and committed so much of my time. It can be distilled down quite simply, for me, the WGCSA was my hobby. My passion was to learn and to imitate how other chapter leaders thought, organized, acted and reacted to the issues affecting the WGCSA. It was my goal to better myself in public settings by speaking and to build confidence and self esteem.

Mentors like Monroe Miller, William Roberts, Danny Quast, Randy Smith, Carl Grassl, and Jim Belfield will be remembered for their important leadership roles in helping to shape my policies and convictions. My most memorable experience was watching Rod Johnson simply blossom with self confidence during his tenure on the board. I really must thank Roger Bell for the second chance to succeed when he placed me once again on the ballot after I

fell victim to a political backlash after one earlier two-year term. Most of all, I would like to thank Bob Musbach for allowing me, an assistant golf course superintendent, the opportunity to serve on the board. I believe that I'm only the second assistant golf course superintendent to have served on the board. That is something that I'm proud of.

I was asked if I accomplished all my goals as your president. My answer simply is "yes and no." I would still like to have that one "identifiable golfer" within the state become the association's spokesman, someone who would represent us and our ideals at allied association events. I'll be keeping my eyes and ears open. I had no hidden personal agendas or a grand intention

(Continued on page 5)

PENDELTON TURF SUPPLY

Ed Witkowski

- Chemicals
- Full Line of Turf Products
- Competitive Pricing
- New Product Information

Satisfaction Guaranteed

414-421-6474

9305 Oak Creek Ct.
Franklin, WI 53132

(Continued from page 3)

of remaking the WGCSA into my image. My plan was to simply move forward into the unknowns of tomorrow. It is my belief, you accomplish your goals during the time you spend on the board. Policies and procedures that are implemented and fine tuned as you proceed through the chairs are the issues that will determine the course of the association history. I believe in nine people

focused on getting the job done. Were their disappointments along the way? You bet. Having good friends and fellow board members criticize you over decisions made or having the board labeled as a whole as "spineless" for having not stood up to the GCSAA's dual membership initiative are the things that "toughen the leather" of your hide. Peace.

So now it is my turn to join the ranks of "old timers" and fade from view as I hand the gavel over to

Scott Schaller. Your association, my friends, are in great hands. Earlier I mentioned that I learned and awful lot from our predecessors; let me be the first to tell you how impressed I am with the present lineup of leadership waiting in the wings. These guys know their stuff and are prepared to lead the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Associations into the next millennium. I've enjoyed being and serving as president.

Happy trails and godspeed to all. 🌿

TORO

puts Irrigation Control in the Palm of Your Hand.



Here's the Single Solution to Your Irrigation Control Problems . . .

The OSMAC Radio Paging Based System . . . consisting of:

One or more RDR radio data receiver field units attached to your existing or new pedestals and connected to your existing or new field wires. The RDR field unit allows independent scheduling of each station. And since each RDR field unit can control up to 48 stations, it is possible to replace multiple controller sites with one RDR.

A standard IBM compatible computer for easy yet precise, flexible and powerful centralized control, using the OSMAC PC Timer Software.

The Central Control Station. A small, desk-top paging encoder that includes a built in radio frequency transceiver to provide local-area signalling to the field satellites, radio paging, two-way communications or telephone interconnect.

One or more Portable Radios for remote control of valves, initiating pages, two-way communications, and telephone interconnect.

Optional pagers for signalling staff or other personnel.

An optional centralized rain gauge interface is available.

Reinders

Irrigation Supply

ELM GROVE
13400 Watertown Plank Rd.
414-786-3301

MADISON
4618 A Tompkins Dr.
608-223-0200

APPLETON
900 Randolph Dr.
414-788-0200

ENGINE POWER

1830 Executive Drive
Oconomowoc, WI 53226

Don't let your equipment sit idle while you wait for engine parts! Depending on your needs, we will take care of you direct or help you find your local engine dealer. Let the engine experts help you!

We carry a full parts inventory. Ask for our parts department.

414-567-8575 or 800-242-2289 (phone)

414-567-2256 or 800-897-8999 (fax)



The Source for Power...
Worldwide™

HONDA ENGINES



Kubota

LOMBARDINI