

Grateful

By Jake Schneider, Assistant Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

In the January/February 2009 issue of *The Grass Roots*, I wrote the following, "Hopefully, with a little luck and a whole lot of determination, I'll be worrying about my first day as a superintendent in a couple of years." This winter, I had the opportunity to interview for a position that I had been targeting for many years, and suffice to say that I considered it to be my dream job. Going into the interview as the youngest and least experienced candidate, no one had to tell me that I was in for an uphill battle. However, I also felt as if my education and real-world experience were extremely relevant to the position. That, along with the backing of some of the state's most legendary superintendents gave me a good deal of confidence going into the interview room.

Prior to getting drilled with questions, each of the committee members were given a binder that I'd prepared for the occasion. After the Q & A session, I gave a PowerPoint presentation that I'd prepared weeks in advance, and I felt as if I'd nailed it. From my perspective, the interview went extraordinarily well, and the interviewers seemed to agree. Walking back to my car, I knew that I had given myself the best chance possible for further consideration, and my head was held high (or as high as it can, given my vertical limita-


tion).

As you can probably guess based on the title below my name not changing, I found out a few agonizing weeks later that I didn't get the job. Man oh man was I bummed. Deep down, I honestly felt as if I was the best candidate, but I also have no doubt that the candidate that they selected will succeed tremendously. Based on the feedback that I received, the fact that I've never been a head superintendent was the main chink in my armor; to which I asked myself, "How am I supposed to be a head superintendent if I'm not a head superintendent?" Pity ensued for the next two-and-a-half days.

Once the cloud of misery lifted, I realized how lucky that I am on a number of fronts. First and foremost, it was a privilege to even be considered for the position, and it's hopefully a sign that my career is on the right track. I'm fully aware that there are other highly-qualified assistants in this state who have been looking to advance for longer than have I. Secondly, my consolation prize was returning to one of the best and most rewarding assistant jobs in the state. In a time when veteran superintendents are out of work or are subject to seasonal layoffs that are completely out of their control, it's hard to sell a sob story while receiving a con-

sistent paycheck. Plus, my wife's new RN gig has us feeling as if we're downright loaded.

Now that I've had some time to reflect, I still really wanted that job, but not getting it has helped me to refocus on personal improvement. After getting the bad news, a very successful Blackhawk member who I have a great deal of respect for told me, "Not all learning experiences are enjoyable! Your time should be spent on the things you can control." Numerous people have told me that everything happens for reason. The optimist in me tells me that that's true, and I'll be anxiously awaiting what exactly that reason is.

By now, you're undoubtedly asking yourself, "What's the moral of this rambling story?" Well, here it is, you impatient reader... If you've been searching for a gig, keep improving and have faith that good things happen to good people. If you have a job, be grateful, don't become complacent, and bust your hump to do the best that you possibly can. This young man, for one, is going to do exactly that. Hopefully, with a little luck and a whole lot of determination, I'll be worrying about my first day as a superintendent in a couple of years. Until then, I've got it pretty good, and I hope that you do too. 



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