

FROM THE PUBLISHER



Many times as I've sat down to write this column I've wanted to write about the people who make up this industry. Each time I started to write, I felt my words were trite and unimportant. However, my mind always seems to come back to people. After all, it is they who make things happen. We live in a people world. The more I think about it, the stronger I feel that it is important to recognize those who make our industry tick.

Over the years, I've had the opportunity to meet with and talk to people from all facets of our industry—people from all walks of life, with varied backgrounds, who in one way or another found their way into our business. I must

confess I'm impressed. I'm impressed with the fact that most of these people started "in the trenches" and worked their way up. I'm impressed that so many chose this field because they like to help make things grow and like to work outdoors.

However, I am most impressed by the dedication I see all around. It is one thing to be successful and earn a good living, or get a better return on your investment. It is another story to dedicate yourself to your life's work and have it carry over to your spare time as well. The Metropolitan Washington Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Northern Ohio Golf Course Superintendents Association are just two groups whose members donate their spare time to interface with local high schools. They invite the groundskeepers from these high schools to attend seminars and they even go so far as to volunteer to visit the high school stadiums and help solve their sports turf problems. They don't get paid to do this, it's a labor of love.

I've seen individuals whose every waking moment is involved with the sports turf industry—from early morning, conventions and trade shows. I have even met people who use convention time as a vacation, taking along the whole family.

I have observed some of these people rise from obscurity to become highly successful and I have marveled at their success. It is now very obvious to me that this didn't happen by chance. Their dedication and their pride is what made it happen. Those who toil on the sports fields and the golf courses can't fake it for too long. They have to know their stuff. It is unfortunate that others don't fully appreciate the professionalism it takes to manage these large turf areas. I have been involved in other industries, but never have I seen the *esprit de corps*, the concern and dedication that I see when I look at our industry.

We are a large group of independent thinkers. We do a lot of experimenting, always looking to develop better turf practices. We are constantly striving for improvement. Our industry is served by many small companies that generate billions of dollars into the economy of this country. I believe one of our greatest assets is the fact that because we have so many companies in this field, we benefit from their entrepreneurial endeavors. We benefit from the variety of equipment, tools, seed, fertilizers and chemicals they make available to us. They too are part of us and have the dedication and commitment. Now we need to share our knowledge with others. Just as sports turf managers at major stadiums have techniques to share with their counterparts at schools and parks, the field managers at these facilities may have practical solutions that the stadium field manager can use. This process of exchange has begun and the entire industry will benefit greatly.

Using our ingenuity along with our enthusiasm is what makes this industry tick. We're growing by leaps and bounds, and it's people who turn the wheels. I personally congratulate all of you. You deserve a hearty round of applause.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis E. Smith".