

Mentoring? What's It Worth?

PLENTY, ESPECIALLY IN THE CLUB BUSINESS!

Some months ago, Ron Banaszak, the GM/COO of the St. Francis Yacht Club, San Francisco, CA sent me a short email.

"Tim Bakels (GM/COO of the Hamilton Farm Golf and Country Club, Gladstone, NJ) has been my mentor and friend for 11 years and we bring an interesting relationship and outlook on private clubs that we think would be an enhancement to your magazine. Dave, are you interested in a story about my mentor?"

Ron's a fairly persuasive guy, but after listening briefly to his story, it really didn't take much persuasion. "Sure, when will you have it?"

That being said, it's taken Ron and mentor Tim several months to get their thoughts down on paper, but it's been worth the wait.

There's probably many of us who can go back over our careers and pinpoint one moment, one time or one incident that set us on an unwavering course. And often it happened when we met someone in our lives who ultimately had a great influence on who we are, and what we've done over the years.

A favorite high school football coach of mine from teenage days, while teaching in the classroom and on the field, made an indelible mark on many naïve, young men that's lasted through the years. He helped set our life's course. He's still a friend and teacher to so many that a couple of hundred of us gathered a while back to pay homage with a round of golf and rousing

evening of tales. But my, did we learn. We trusted each other!

And I recall a first-job editor who took me under his wing for several years as together we slowly built my repertoire of working knowledge as a writer and editor. "Call anytime," my trusting mentor said. I did 'til the day he died.

Mentoring I've done myself...with aspiring young writers and students batting around ideas, testing the water or finding solace. It's a very rewarding experience, with relationships that have lasted through the years. Often we learn as much as the ones we're mentoring.

Bakels and Banaszak, in their story, "The Circle of Life: Establishing an Effective Mentorship" stress that mentoring young managers is the future of the private club industry. Why? Because the "handing on of traditions, knowledge, culture and leadership qualities is a natural result of a quality mentoring relationship."

There are so very many reasons why mentoring is important. Young up and comers have someone upon whom they can rely for vision, counsel, experience, for knowledge, for understanding, and they want to learn. For managers, young people bring energy, new ideas, someone to help along life's path and someone who's always available.

Mentorships are two-way relationships and while they may have their challenges, are undeniably beneficial to both people. And as Tim and Ron suggest, it's a relationship that goes from "mentor to friend to life coach to peer."

What can be better than that!



DAVE WHITE
EDITOR, BOARDROOM



Congratulations to Mike Leemhuis (our cover story), COO and general manager, the Congressional Country Club. He takes the reins as CMAA's president for 2009, in challenging times. But Mike, whose Mother was one of his greatest mentors has never shucked a challenge because he's always believed, "There was much more he had to do."

It's a point he proves in his BoardRoom interview with Rick Coyne.

A strong work ethic, focus, perseverance and persistence as well as Mike's leadership by example will stand CMAA in good stead in these very testing times. And that's just what's needed.

And a final note...we continue this issue with our introduction of BoardRoom's 21 Presidents of the Year including John Anhorn, President, Rogue Valley Country Club, Medford, Oregon; Arch Arnold III, President, The Country Club of Columbus, Columbus, Georgia; Kjell Axelsson, Chairman, Kalmar Golf Club, Kalmar, Sweden and Kevin Bublitz, President, Western Racquet Club, Elm Grove, Wisconsin. **BR**

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