

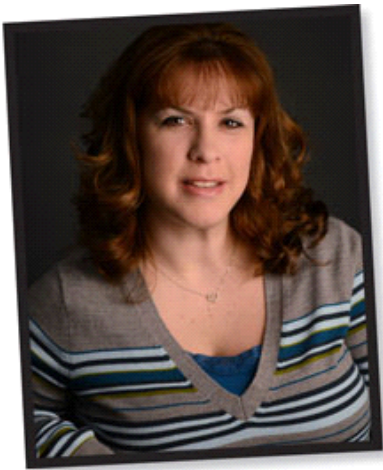
GROWERTALKS

Columns

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Revisiting Some History

Jennifer Zurko



JENNIFER ZURKO

This year, *GrowerTalks* turns 80 years old. We're not doing anything major like we did for our 75th, but it's still worth acknowledging how important this next milestone is—not just for our magazine, but for the industry as well.

I'd like to think that *GrowerTalks* was there during the “birth” of the horticulture industry. Of course, there were flower growers before then. But I don't think it had its own little niche carved out from agriculture until George J. Ball got frustrated with *Florist's Review* and decided to create his own publication. He wanted to share his growing knowledge with others and, in turn, learn from them. He must have done something right because we're still here and going along swimmingly.

Whenever we reach an anniversary or want to recall a memory about a well-known industry veteran, we look to the *GrowerTalks* archives. It's a fun and interesting exercise when we go through them—especially the ones prior to the 1970s—to see what Vic Ball (George's son) was talking about then. Some of it reflects the culture of the times (women working—novel idea!) and how much the industry has changed.

Bossman Beytes took a walk through history when he visited White's Nursery & Garden Center a few months ago while he was doing a quick tour in the state of Virginia. Before he left, he looked through some past *GrowerTalks* issues and realized that the company's founder, Norm White, has graced our cover five times. We knew it had to be a record. So, to honor the history of our publication and for Norm's contribution to our industry, we've put him on the cover for the sixth time. (I joked to Chris that it's like being part of the club of people who've hosted SNL more than five times.)

Chris brought copies of those issues to show Norm as he sat down with him, his daughter, Dana, and son, Tal (both help run the business). Norm got a kick out of seeing what he and Vic talked about back then. They talked about the business—then and now, including some regrets—and what they see for the future. The way Chris wrote the story it makes you feel like you're in the room with them as they banter back and forth. You should definitely read it and get a look at those old covers featuring Norm.

As we take a walk down memory lane in one article, in another we look at the innovative hardgoods and digital products that are available to help your business be more successful moving forward. There's lots of good stuff.

We also have our annual California Spring Trials guide and map. We put it all on one page so you can tear it out and use it to make your plans. Or you can go to www.springtrials.com to get all the info and links to the contact people.

The year 2016 was history-making in a lot of ways—and not in a positive way for a lot of people. So, as we look toward the future and what this year will bring, I think about what Abe VanWingerden says in his column: “Too many times, we see only the worst in others and we see only the best in ourselves. Let’s turn that around in 2017 and focus on developing productive relationships with our customers and employees.”

I say, “Amen!” to that. **GT**