

This is my first day on the job, so be patient. I realize that I am trying to fill some very big shoes. Mark Jarrell has done a great job and has written some very fine articles that I certainly enjoyed reading over the years. Mark is moving on to serve on the FTGA board and we all wish him well.

As I watch the news these days, it seems that there are many popular storms out there. First there was Bonnie, a category-three hurricane that churned off the Florida coast for days and made many people nervous. As she finally turned to the north and headed toward the Carolinas, we turned our attention to Danielle. At

the same time, President Clinton was bracing for a hurricane named Monica.

As superintendents, we deal with storms all the time. Like President Clinton these storms can be political and caused by other people. These storms can be large weather- and newsmakers like hurricanes and El Niños or they can be groups that don't see things the way that we do. I am amazed sometimes how much we depend on the weather. Starting in the fall, we worry about too much rain washing our seed. If we get a good germination, we then worry about weather that is too hot and/or wet if you seed early, or too cold and wet if you seed later.

Once we have established our overseeding, then we have to contend with El Niños, then droughts, then even forest fires. We then depend on the weather for a smooth transition. It's funny how we are never satisfied with the weather. It seems that it can be too hot or too cold, or too wet or too dry. I guess that no matter what, we just have to deal with it and hope for better in the days to come.

Our jobs are multi-dimensional and weather is just one of the factors that can affect our jobs. A few years ago I remember that I was talking to a fellow superintendent and I caught myself complaining about the weather. At that point I finally realized that day in and day out, we have

some of the best weather in the country and, from then on, I vowed to try to not complain about something that I have no control over.

To a degree we do have control over some of our political storms. It takes patience and control to make this work and sometimes it still may be a hopeless situation. As superintendents we may need to sell ourselves and our programs and I have found that the proactive approach has worked best. Being a good grass grower rarely is enough anymore. Members like to see you around. Make it a point to be seen if only briefly during important club or course tournaments.

Ride the course or at least nine holes in reverse order on a busy day so that many of your golfers can see you. Take every opportunity to write an article in the club newsletter. Get to know the other chairpersons at your club as well as the directors. Try to play golf with members when the time is appropriate.

You may even want to briefly hang around the pro shop to be available to the members. This way if a member has a question, you can answer it directly. Overseeding is such a critical time of the year it is important to be visible. Your reputation for the year is dependent on your getting those little seeds up and growing and molded into an acceptable putting surface by New Year's.

As we head into the overseeding season, keep your head up and keep moving forward. It seemed for a while that every time that I put out seed, it would rain cats and dogs sometime during that week. It got to the point that other superintendents in Vero Beach would call to find out when I would be seeding so that they could pick another week. My first year at Bent Pine, I got 13 inches of rain in the first two weeks that my seed was down. We've all had weeks like that but we keep on going. It keeps our jobs interesting.

I am looking forward to this new position with the *Florida Green*. We can always use stories written by our fellow associates in this great business. As we go into the fall season, be sure to have fungicide on the shelf and an umbrella handy.

Stormy Weather

The Bell Tolls



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