



Seasonal Reflections

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Editor

Satiated after consuming one last sliver of left over turkey potpie, the couch beckons me. Outside the sound of ice forming pressure ridges on Lake Sylvan, expanding and contracting, sends a twang through the late afternoon air; cold, snowy, the golf season has come to a close.

Sadie, finally tired of pulling Nuggets ears, has curled up at my feet and is busy removing the eyes from her 'unstuffed' fake fox. Thankfully, the squeaky has long since been punctured. Now I can reflect upon the last twelve months in peace.

December 2009 was a mixed month. The course put to bed on time and a solid snow cover eased any concerns I may have had. Tyson, the dog whom I didn't want yet grew to love, had his first of many seizures. A ridged stretch, screaming groans and loss of dignity was followed by meds to limit his malady. After two fun Santa gigs at private clubs I visited my former wife's niece Carly who had recovered from a drowning accident only to suffer a heart attack. Not even in her teens she receives help 24/7. She excelled in watercolor, a true artist. My kids are home from school. Oh how I love them. Tyler a Senior and Madeline a sophomore; hearing them tell tales of college is the best gift of the year. Healthy, happy.

No 'Big Show' for me in 2010. In fact the economy has contracted to the point where "family hold back" isn't just a phrase from the seventies. The proverbial package is shrinking across

the country, either through salary cutbacks and furloughs or just the invisible inflation denied so strongly by our Nation's economists. Do they even buy meat for their own tables? Tree trimming on the course goes well. No injuries, good weather and plenty of time to be grateful that I have a job and love what I do.

My father isn't doing well in February. At 82 years young his back, injured hitting golf balls last fall, has limited him to his recliner. My heart aches as he struggles to maintain some resemblance of his former self. He declines. Surgery to fuse several of his vertebrae is scheduled. On the table, sedated, the doctors pull back, his blood pressure so low that going under the knife isn't an option. More tests, four days tripped out on muscle melting medications, my father waits to be discharged from his multi-functional, heated, vibrating, and reticulating bed. TV speakers in the hand rails no less. Back home and one week later he is a living miracle. He has no back pain, walks like a champ and enjoys his ice-cream once again. Kim and I take our kids to Lutsen. Fun, Fun, Fun!!! Dog sledding, spaing, skiing. Joyous family time.

March brings a transition among my staff. Jeff, my Assistant for ten years, departs for Arizona, we wish him well. Fresh from Rutgers, Justin takes up residence across the 12' by 12' office from me. Not much of a maple run! Damn, only about a gallon. Rapid warm weather ushers in the earliest opening on record; the 28th!

Not a pleasant April Fools day. With a very heavy heart I held Tyson close as he was put down. None of the medications really did much. Either he was looped from the dope or convulsing from his epilepsy. Nugget watched as Kim and I buried him down by the woodpile he used to explore. Hunting squirrels I imagine. We even planted a tree on his grave. Damn, it hurt to lose that dog. The course came through winter in mint condition. Really! It is picture perfect and the season starts with a bang. Madeline, my daughter, brings a very nice young man home from college for Easter. HmMMM

May Day. I always think of my Mom in early May. Gone for six years, she loved the change of seasons as much as I do. No green aerification this spring too cause undue player consternation; instead a new program of more frequent sand topdressings and regular cultivation with the Planetaire aerifier. I really, really dig this machine. Sadly, it will be the last delivery for a while from Tom, my orange iron dealer. Notification of a terminal lung condition has forced him from our ranks as he gets in line for a transplant. What the heck...terminal...transplant...life can be cruel. Prayers are in order. Tyler finished college. Degreed in economics and business he has charted his course back to school next fall to pursue his dream, "to be a superintendent at a tournament course." Yes, I am a little proud! And glad to be done with one four-year investment if you know what I mean.

The ranks of my troop overflow! Finally June arrives and my gang is as busy as a hive of bees getting caught up to my player's seasonal expectations. Mow, mow Mondays are in effect! Member play is up and the course is awesome. Civitas looks good, with a slight modification of Harmonizer, we cut back our fertilizer to save some cash and the first zebra mussels of the year begin to plug our irrigation heads! Acid injections keep them in check, but we still suck a few through our intakes. Zebras are a real pain in the butt!

Fireworks with my gang at home. Always a blast and continued huge event with their friends, family and lots of aerial displays! My new first is awesome, our team is operating as a well-oiled greensaire and the weather has provided for the best conditioning opportunities I can recall. Gotta love a nice summer. Late in the month I spotted my first mass of Jap beetles. Having never really watched a live sex orgy I was intrigued! Pretty crazy! Green speeds smooth 10.5 to 11 all the time...cool, real cool.

August. Summer arrived. If you grow Poa you knew that summer had tossed a hand grenade into your ho-hum fun season. It snuck up on me. Day temps were not too high, but the

(Continued on Page 31)

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In Bounds-

(Continued from Page 30)

nighttime lows never cooled down...ever. Pythium runnith rampant! Anything protected needed a bit extra and anything not was smoked! Even healthy Poa plants just checked out; more of my grass than I care to think about. Soooo lets throw some rabies into the mix; both my wife and daughter were bit by our 'garage cat', on a Friday too boot. No time for quick capture, I plugged him with five pieces of lead and hauled the culprit to the vet. Two tests, several visits to the emergency room to ward off infection, quite a bit of pain and suffering latter; on Monday the orange tabby was diagnosed with rabies. Now the fun began...shots for one and all! Tyler and me included as we lived in the proximity. No tummy injections but a series of four untimely visits. We covered our \$6,000 family deductible!

Junior year begins for Madeline, our gun slinger, as she continues her criminal justice degree. Hold on, weren't we just in the BWCA together...last May...a few days ago? September can be such a challenge. The crew gets cut dramatically (sort of nice though after a busy season of management), expectations still run high, the days are shorter, the gardens become ratty, geese do fly bys and we stop changing the water coolers...all 13 of them...every day. Oh yeah, can you say RECOVERY!!!!!! Thank God grass grows in spite of what we do! My club hosts the Wee One Event in Tom's honor. Everyone takes a pause, choke a bit and empathize with his plight as he addresses the group. The support is uplifting, the cause depressing. My sciatic nerve doesn't feel so bad anymore.

Goooolish October came and went with an incredible display of prolonged Indian Summer. Not scary at all. Fairways are punched multiple times with the Planetaire. Membership thrilled with lack of disruption. Greens accepting the lack of aerification well too! Justin and Tyler head to Rutgers for their continued

education. Empty nesters at home...love it! Finally, I can tackle the projects that have been waiting since...April?

Christmas came early in November at the MacKenzie's. The love of my life, after taking care of our 18-month-old grand nephew for a weekend, informs me that it is time to get a puppy! How does that work? We research Sheltie, Border collie, and Australian Sheppard rescue groups. Nothing available locally, we rescue a miniature (should be 20 pounds or so) Australian Sheppard from a southern Minnesota breeder whose farm was erased in the September flood. Sadie, a beautiful gray, black and brown Merle is a doll. And will stay that way. According to our veterinarian at our second post-purchase visit, Sadie is a 'toy' and won't get much bigger than ten blocks of butter. Well, I have heard that it takes a big man to own a little dog! Got a call from my son the other day. Tied with another for tops in his class; has some amazing options, may be staying out East. Tells me, "you know Dad I wish I would have done this sooner. No, not start my turf education, but I wish I would have applied myself in school as hard as I am now." Ahhh, he gets it! I always knew he was pretty bright.

The evening sky is incredible in late November. For all of the sun sets I miss during the summer the early winter always provides me with breath taking displays at a time of day when I can sit back and enjoy them. Next week as Santa Claus I will again visit Carly. Is that gurgle she expresses an acknowledgement of happier times? Could she ever join us again with the energy and exuberance of her former self? Will she ever paint a resplendent orange and pink November sun dipping in the west? I hope so. I pray so.

Sadie just passed a little puppy gas. God Bless her! And God Bless you my friends. May your Christmas and Holiday Season bring you joy. May peace reign over your world. In the craziness of this time of year, take account of your blessings; reflect. Life is full of challenges and glory. Embrace it! **Merry Christmas.**

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