



Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak, CGCS

It was an overcast day at Kansas City Country Club in late March 1994. March

in Kansas City is hit or miss as far as nice weather goes but it was cooler than normal that day and we didn't get going on this job until early afternoon. I was the 2nd assistant at the time leading a couple crew members in the selective removal of several large black walnut trees located in a native area between the 11th hole and the 13th/14th tee area. It had been decided by somebody that there were a few too many trees in that area and the idea was to open things up for some air movement on this part of the course.

I'm quite sure it took a lot to get to that decision point. After all, KCCC was a private club that has stood the test of time. Like any old club the matter of trees was and probably still is quite a hot-button political issue and the three of us had been given the dastardly task of tree removers- a job akin to Jack the Ripper to some. My biggest concern was getting verbally dressed-down by one of those individuals, and how I would handle it.

The temperature that day was cool but we had worked up a pretty good sweat and had peeled at least a couple layers off before deciding to take a break. While we rested against our utility vehicles two members had happened upon the 13th green and made their way in their cart towards the 14th tee. It was unusual to see any members on the course in March

at KCCC, much less a pair well north of retirement age but there they were making their way towards us. As they passed by I could hear the elder of the two who still had quite a set of pipes on him.

"They're cutting down the walnut forest," I heard him exclaim somewhat bewildered.

Great, I thought in my mind. Here it comes. Both of them are going to come over here and start berating me on the evils of cutting down the magnificent timber and how dare I this and how could you that and I'm going to have a talk with your boss and so forth.

The cart stopped and the other member mumbled something I didn't quite catch but along the lines of "things change", and then came the line.

"Change is only good if you get five quarters for a dollar!" he bleated with every fiber of his being. I remember seeing a little line of spit or snot or some bodily fluid fling from his craggy face as he pronounced his disdain for our days' activity.

Then, with every orifice of my body puckered and ready for the battle, to my astonishment they both simply walked towards the 14th tee, meekly hit their golf balls, got in their cart and drove on. I guess they decided we weren't the ones to force their opinions on at that moment. That was fine with me. I quickly fired up my chain saw and got back to work.

But then I started thinking. Wow! What a line. Change is only good if you get five quarters for a dollar. Not quite "So I've got that going for me- which is nice," (Carl Spackler) or "So you're saying there's a

chance,” (Jim Carrey’s line in *Dumb and Dumber*) but pretty darn good none the less. You could use this line in any situation that involved change, and be sure to get at least a quizzical look. You can say it and mean it (against change), or say it sarcastically (for change). Little did that old member realize his contribution to my arsenal of one-liners. The flag at KCCC has long since flown at half-staff for him, but his magnificent line of old-time thinking lives on, which it did early fall last year.

I was sitting in my office talking with an associate and the subject of Hole Notes going all digital came up, the first time I had heard of it.

“Change is not good unless you get five quarters for a dollar!” I yelled at him quite proud of the fact that I was again able to use the clever old line. But wait a minute- did I mean it or was it satire? How did I really think about that proposition?

I have always been late to the technology party. Not cleaning up the tables, last call-late but certainly not “I know how to tap that keg,” early. I have resembled the old KCCC member in some regards and certainly when it comes to taking away my printed copy of anything.

Newspapers, magazines, books- it is just what I’m used to and I can’t change. Or can I?

Life is all about change, constant change. They should have added change along with death and taxes as the only sure things in life. Not only is change constant, but it seems to be growing exponentially. If you told me I would be doing half the things I am doing now with communication ten years ago I would have said you are nuts. E-mail? Hated it. I can’t check that every day. Now, it’s three or four times a day with no questions or issues. Texting? That’s complete garbage. If you can’t pick up the phone and talk to me, then forget it. I refuse to be one of those sniveling kids with that device pressed so close to their face and their tiny fingers working like spiders weaving a cell-phone web. Now, I text every day and it is the main way I communicate to crew members when they are not at the course, and I always get responses. Fast, simple and concise.

So why not have Hole Notes go digital. What am I afraid of? Staring at a computer? Surely I will be able to get it on my mobile device, and maybe share with others. You know-

communication? It will be much more interactive, and won’t stack up in the bookcase. In fact, I won’t even need a bookcase. I will be able to summon any old articles with a touch of my smart phone, and it will save the association a bunch of money. I guess I like the idea so much- I want to be the editor!

O.K.- that decision was not made because of Hole Notes going digital, but you get my point. This new direction is a good thing. Granted, it will take some getting used to and will come as a bit of a shock for some, but if it forces MGCSA members into the technology era then it will be a good thing. Change is going to happen and the faster, more open-minded individual will then reap the benefits in the long run. Embrace change. Make it your friend. Not just for this publication but personally and professionally. It is going to happen, so do not be like the old KCCC member. Do not be searching for the fifth quarter while life zooms past you.