



Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak CGCS

Get involved.
Two simple words in the English

language that when put together form a powerful concept, capable of producing tremendous things. It does not take a lot to attain get involved- a simple “yes” or “I can do that” usually does the trick- so why does it seem so hard to pull off with most people?

I suppose it is human nature to be reserved and internal. So many of us fall into the trap of self-involvement. We all have busy lives. We all have to put in at least 40 hours a week to make a living, and often times that number reaches much higher. We all lose anywhere from one-quarter to one-third of our existence to sleep. Throw in a significant other, a family, and the many activities associated with that, and many feel that they do not have time for basic bodily functions, let alone volunteerism or dedication to a cause.

But that is where they are wrong.

In my 45 years of existence on this orbiting hunk of magma, I have had the opportunity to encounter many different personalities,

philosophies and viewpoints. My father was in the military, and we moved all over the country and all over the world every three years. That meant every three years I had to form new relationships and assimilate into different groups and cultures. When I became an adult, I moved less, but have continuously been exposed to new groups with new ideas, concepts and outlooks on life.

Whatever the group, whatever the situation, there are people who are leaders, organizers and energizers. There are also plenty of passive, non-aggressive, can't be bothered with or don't have the time to- sheep, that either selfishly just follow along, or simply cannot muster the energy to contribute. Which group do you think really has the time?

I have found that the leaders are the ones that are in dire need of a time out, but happily serve. They are the ones who always take on the challenge, even though they have plenty on the plate. They are the ones who make an impact, make a difference, usually for the benefit of the sheep.

The problem is, if you are sheep, you don't know what you are missing.

The feeling you get while volunteering or helping an organization along or becoming a part of a solution

to a large problem is intense and very satisfying. It is the giving, not the getting that truly fulfills.

Not that I have not been sheep before, or have sheep moments in my current life. Before I was married, my future wife and I had visited my grandmother in East Chicago, Indiana. If you have ever had the displeasure of spending time in this industrial hell-hole, you would quickly realize positivity is a scarce commodity. My grandmother, though possessing a big heart, had a sit down with my lady and informed her that I was for myself and not a very giving person. My wife married me anyway, but that conversation has always stuck with me to try and be a better person because if your grandmother thinks you are selfish, you probably are. Maybe not always, but there was definitely room for improvement.

Sometimes all the sheep need is an inspiration, or a swift kick in the rear like my grandmother afforded me. If you are searching for such an inspiration, check out the rap sheet on this year's DSA award winner, Paul Diegnau, CGCS.

As Eric Councilman, Superintendent, Somerby Golf Club delivered his introductory speech at the MGCSA awards banquet last week, I was somewhat taken aback by his accomplishments. Besides his service

to the MGCSA, Paul served and gave his valuable time to all kinds of government relations boards and committees, environmental groups and wildlife groups. He did all these things while putting in the hours as a superintendent, and raising a family. Paul is no sheep, and if you read Eric's story about Paul in the previous pages, I think you may come away inspired to serve in some capacity on some worthy cause.

Take a second to look around. There are so many opportunities to help out, and many of them are staring you right in the eye. Some of them are even in your comfort zone, but the ones outside of that zone are the ones with the most potential return.

The giving of your valuable time can be a very hard commitment to make, but the rewards are worth it. Whether it is a work association, charity, church, whatever, take the time to consider what a piece or your time would mean to that organization, and ultimately, yourself. As a superintendent you have already demonstrated an ability to lead and you, by the nature of your job, have to be versatile and level headed. This is just the kind of mind-set these organizations need.

Get involved.