



# Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak, CGCS

As we near the halfway point of the season it seems I usually run out of high quality ideas for this column and need to just kind of wing it. So here it goes. We will call this casual musings on the first half of the season.

Let's start with the topic everybody is talking about and sick of talking about at the same time: the weather. Now I'm not sure what God said to Noah that sparked his interest in building an ark, but I'm starting to think he might not have said anything at all. He may have just let what has happened here the last two months happen and Noah figured it out all on his own. If that's the case, we all had better run to the lumber store pretty soon.

Honestly, enough already. This is easily the wettest stretch I have seen in Woodbury since I started here close to 15 years ago. For those of us who drain well, we are just keeping up. For those who don't- yikes!

The silver lining of course, is that the groundwater supply has to be getting near full capacity again after being down for quite some time, helping douse the flames of the water conservation folks- for a little while anyway. However, just because we are in deluge mode doesn't mean water issues are going away, and keep your eyes peeled for the MGCSA's water certification program that will be introduced shortly. It will be good for all of us to participate in this extremely important program. You know the sky spigot will be turned off eventually, and then the joys and sorrows of irrigation will be upon us, along with the outside scrutiny of how we water and how much water we are using.

I played in the MGCSA Scramble at Dellwood Country Club on June 2nd along with a handful of other participants. Despite the rains and the fact that Eric Peterson and his staff have been undergoing a renovation, the place was in fantastic shape and we caught a really nice day to boot. Thank you to Eric and his staff for the opportunity to use the facility

for the Scholarship and Research Tournament. It was just a shame more of you couldn't have shared the experience.

I know I am beating a dead horse here, but member participation in events is a real issue. As a member of the board, I can tell you that it is probably one of the most discussed topics, and the most frustrating. We have heard all the reasons for non-participation in events whether it's cost, don't have time, same guys always win, whatever. Here's my take and you can do with it what you please. Being a member of the MGCSA is not a one-way street. In order for the MGCSA to function and operate as an entity at its maximum potential, it takes involvement from the very people it is trying to support. That means you. If you just want to pay for your membership, get an online magazine and access to the web site and job board and go about your life that's what you will get.

But, if you pay for your membership, attend an educational event or two, sign up for one of the three golf events, network, learn, communicate with your peers, make a new friend, share a laugh, share a thought, share an idea, share a really great meal, then your

membership and the relatively small fee associated with the event is worth every penny. Your support of the association comes back and supports you, and the more of you who do it, the wealthier we all become. Keep that in mind when considering attending in the future.

One other note about this tournament, and it gets a little more personal. Half of this tournament, that used to be its own tournament until attendance started to wane, is the raising of funds for the MGCSA scholarships that are awarded to member's children attending college. They are directly funded from this tournament. It was indicated by Executive Director Jack MacKenzie that the scholarships were covered from the funds raised at Dellwood, but there wasn't much left for research. At least we covered the scholarships. As I drove away from the tournament, I started wondering how many kids of members this has helped over the years. I then started wondering how many of those recipient's parents were in attendance to give back to the fund that helped their families out.

Two years ago my  
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son was awarded the other of three scholarships available- the Garske Legacy Scholarship supported by the good folks at Par Aide. (Thanks again Steve Garske for supporting this.) Now, the truth is, I used a lot of Par Aide products anyway, but you can be damn sure I don't even bat an eye at other products after he landed his scholarship, just like you can be damn sure I will show at every scholarship scramble humanly possible from here on out. How can I not?

My final observation is from last week's U.S. Open. By now I'm sure every one of you saw or heard about Pinehurst's irrigation elimination and the USGA's boast that this is how golf is supposed to now be and on and on. A colleague of mine was actually in attendance last weekend and these thoughts were conveyed by him initially, but I couldn't agree more.

First of all, it looked pretty cool. The native areas framed the holes very nicely and while it didn't present much of a challenge to the pros like normal US Open rough, it seemed to be accepted by the players generally well. But at what cost?

Cost seems to be the interesting fly in the ointment. The powers that be will tell you about the wonderful cost savings by eliminating

irrigation heads and the cost saving from not watering all day long. That works for the tournament, but what about after? Gone will be the plethora of volunteers to pick all the weeds out of the non-irrigated rough. Gone will be the Bermuda edges that have been worn to dirt from lack of virility. Up will be the cost to fix those issues. The budget to take care of No.2 after the tournaments, despite the cost savings from lack of water- probably up. Greens fees to play No.2 after all this water savings? Yeah, right.

I'm all for water conservation and the proper, efficient use of irrigation. Forced brown just doesn't work. The public golfer is not going to accept it, no matter how hard you try -at least on the public side. For private clubs, if a particular membership buys into it, it may. Ultimately, the people will let us all know with their dollars, simple as that. That's my opinion.

Right now however, dry brown grass is the absolute last thing we all need to worry about. Happy swimming!