



Upon Reflection, 2011 Was a Pretty Good Year

By JACK MacKENZIE, CGCS
Editor

Upon reflection, 2011 was a pretty good year. Whoa, did I just type that?!

Yuuuup!, Dave Hester-like, I did. As I review the last twelve months I consider where I was then, where I am today and where I will be tomorrow.

Throughout 2011 my family and I had pretty good health. Re-bounding from a close call with rabies the previous year I am thrilled to say that beyond a bout of rather uncomfortable food poisoning I suffered in the Boundary Waters the MacKenzie's fared pretty well. No serious colds, good annual check-ups and consistency...if you know what I mean. My health; I take it for granted. Even with the signs of age growing more apparent I must take pause and appreciate my condition.

The kids are all growing well and I am learning to value each of them for the wonderful individuals that they are. My step-daughter is a miracle gal. Once a pin ball looking for the next bumper to hit, today she doubles down on both full time school and work...pulling honors I am proud to say. My step-son has expanded his string instrument horizons and is now proficient in the sitar with which he creates some of the most amazing music I have ever heard. My son spent the summer at Oakmont and is off to The Olympic Club in January. Wow, simply wow. And my youngest is graduating from college in May after she finishes her intern program in criminal justice. Phone calls, emails, facebook, Skype, texts and second hand messages from my wife have filled my heart with the joys of fatherhood. My children...oh how I love them.

It seems that each day I fall in love with my wife again and again. Her wisdom, patience and consistent encouragement kept me going through a few rough patches last summer; her love helped me realize that life is about relationships. As beautiful as the day we met I will never regret posting that advertisement on-line over thirteen years ago. Thank you Al Gore for creating the internet! It has occurred to me that the value of a spouse transcends almost anything life has to offer. A friend, mentor, helper, jokester, sounding board, critic...I am darn lucky.

An acquaintance surprised me a few months ago with comments about me that made my heart glow. Unexpected and most certainly unprompted, I only learned of the kind thoughts through another. As I think about the words he said, I realize that the significance of his conscious effort to express his feelings brings me to an amazing level of contentment. To hear appreciation from another, a friend, peer or family member can bring sunshine on a dreary day or laughter in a somber moment.

Ahhh... my course. While I cannot say that it was pretty all summer long, the bulk of the season was rewarding. Each of you can understand that when a team works together and achieves unexpected goals an almost magical atmosphere can be created. Seamless, transparent, rhythmic and flowing the spirit of recovery; healing we know is achievable if only given time, some luck, a bit of effort and patience. Like yours, my staff was and always will be the heart of the maintenance operation.

Unsugar-coated I will admit that 2011 was not an easy summer for turf managers in our area. As a whole I can think of no harder working group of individuals than the professionals in our industry. We will survive, yes we will survive and be better persons because of it.

Flipping the pages of the tattered calendar upon the wall I reflect and pledge in the year ahead to hold my family tightly, cultivate relationships and appreciate and respect those who help me grow. A kind word, patience, silence, a smile, laugh, wink and nod.

We have each heard it said, "It is only grass." Well, it is.

The Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others,

even to the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexations to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter,

for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble,

it's a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery.

But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals,

and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself.

Especially do not feign affection.

Neither be cynical about love;

for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.

But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings.

Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars;

you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive him to be.

And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life,

keep peace in your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams,

it is still a beautiful world.

Be cheerful.

Strive to be happy.

By Max Ehrmann