



# Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak, CGCS

## **Perspective.**

An amazing word that essentially means

one's point of view of a situation or happening. I guess the word itself isn't so amazing but its meaning sure is. What's amazing is how many different ways any number of people can look at something and come up with a different perspective; a different angle or thought about what some other person might think.

So far this spring the general consensus, or perspective, has been that Mother Nature has once again, for the second year in a row, dealt us a crummy hand. A lousy winter, followed by near record rainfall coupled with cold and wind has left all living things stagnant and begging for warmer temperatures in order to get on with the task of growing and reproducing. While the weather certainly hasn't been without precedent, that doesn't mean it hasn't put a major strain on our industry.

For courses, business is down. For superintendents, projects and overall maintenance has had

schedules disrupted, plans cancelled, and the inevitable question of when is it ever going to warm up and when am I going to get out of this crabby mood I'm in? General grumpiness seems to be the order of the day, followed by stress of all that needs to be done. Well, let me lay one superintendent's perspective on you: Buck up Turfbob Crabbypants, it's just not that bad.

The month of May, 2014 has been a bit of a rocky road for this superintendent. For starters, two good friends discovered or are fighting the scourge of cancer at way too young an age, like there is any good age to have to do so. I'm betting well over half the people reading this column have had to go through this either personally or with loved ones and unfortunately the other half probably will.

Last Monday my daughter, Susan, underwent a procedure to try to help her deal with Cerebral Palsy, which she has had since birth. She had to spend five days in Gillette Children's Hospital and while she is home now and recovering it will still be a long road to recovery. My boss, Dave Mooty, hit the nail on the head with this line in an email he sent offering encouragement: "It is very hard to watch your children suffer."

There are no truer words ever offered to me.

However, it is my perspective that despite this, things will be ok and, in fact, things could be so much worse. Any trip to Gillette for us is a smack in the face reminder of how fortunate we are to be in the position we are in. If you have never been to a clinic/hospital like Gillette you have no idea how many kids there are with serious, serious problems. For every kid, there is a family of any number of people directly affected by the problem. My parents, who visited Gillette for the first time were shocked by what they witnessed on just a normal day as they passed by the clinic to the rehabilitation ward.

The same can be said for when we take Susan to Courage St. Croix for therapy or swimming. One peek around there and you instantly are amazed with how many people are fighting, surviving and thriving under a seemingly infinite number and range of afflictions. It's inspiring at times, and yes, it puts things into: perspective.

Even if you don't know anybody with these kinds of problems or, thankfully, your family is healthy, you need to look no further than the recipients of our own Wee One tournament for some perspective on how hard life can really be and what really matters.

I don't bring this all up to make you feel bad. I don't bring this up to cavalier some cause or tell you to pray three times a day for a cure for everything. I simply want to illustrate that if you put your job into perspective, you might find some of your grumpiness might wane. You might be able to roll with the punches a little bit better. You might be able to see the silver lining in the grey skies and downpours. Blighted turf is not the end of the world. Sluggish greens will eventually grow, irrigation leaks eventually fixed. It's human nature to get down when facing adversity, but with a little resolve and a solid perspective that there are a whole lot of others facing way more important issues than anything happening on a golf course, things become a little easier to digest, game plan and accomplish. That doesn't mean you shouldn't care about the job, or take pride in what you do, but don't allow it to become all-encompassing and turn you into something you are not.

I leave you with this thought: the golf course was there before you. It will be there after you, and they don't erect bronze statues of golf course superintendents. They just don't. But, that's one man's perspective.