

phrase “you know, if I never play this game ever again it would be fine with me” has been uttered more than a dozen times by her over the years, usually after hitting the 12th or 13th shot about 50 feet down a seemingly endless par-5.

She also is not a sports fan. Not really at all. She plays along, but the aforementioned statement about never again would be fine would probably apply to anything I would happen to want to watch on TV.

However today, as she happened by the big screen HD telecast, she set down next to me to watch the happenings at Augusta for a moment. She broke the silence as the leaders were coming off number 12 and then proceeded up 13 to the green surrounded by bunkers and Azalea bushes in full regalia.

“That is amazing, it’s like a painting,” she said.

I instantly laughed and kind of dismissed her comment with well, of course, it’s the Masters! I then proceeded to tell her the nuances of turf management for this event from the grass to the ensuring of Azaleas blooming and blah, blah, blah. Later, however I reflected on that moment.

What she witnessed at the Masters really was art, and her eye saw that art on full display. What she saw was beauty. Not just the flowers, but the whole thing. She was captured by that Augusta moment.

We all need to capitalize on that Augusta moment. It’s real, it’s tangible,

and with golf courses closing faster than they are opening everybody associated with golf had better think about ways to capture people like this who don’t really play much but can see and understand all the wonderful things that the game offers from beauty, to challenge, to a peaceful fun time or whatever. Golf can mean anything to anyone, it is up to all of us in the golf industry to help it along.

I think it is safe to say that we have all heard of the “Augusta Syndrome,” the idea that the Masters sets unrealistic expectations that normal operations just can’t hold a candle to. I am sure in some places that can be true. I submit that the “Augusta Syndrome” can be used to our advantage. There is no greater exposure to the game than the Masters. There is no greater representative of all the beauty that a golf course can be. There is no better time to capture the imagination of closet golfers like the two people I mentioned and try to get them hooked on the game. I plan on badgering my wife to play more. That will be easy. I will also try to get the friend out at least two, maybe three times this year with me in hopes it will light that spark. That may be a little harder but I’m going to try.

Embrace the Masters, don’t run from it. It truly is good for all that is golf.