

our skills and to gain knowledge. My assistants and I split time on association and chapter meetings. When I'm away from the course, I do call in to ease my mind to know that there were no major problems.

Mr. Olsen and our general manager, Jim Carman, encourage and support our staff to attend meetings and seminars. Positive influences are a great attribute to our careers here at Black Diamond.

On a negative subject, my worst nightmare was not on the golf course but on a more personal level. It came in the form of unflattering and derogatory remarks made by an unknown person.

As a new superintendent, I was anxious to prove my knowledge and professionalism. An attack on my character was not a good start for a boost of confidence. Terry Lagree, our general manager at the time, saw how this negativity affected me and he made sure we talked in depth until my uneasy feelings were resolved.

On that day, Terry helped me to un-

derstand that what is most important is how well I do my job by my own standards and not let jealousy or hatred affect my attitude. Since that day, I've not looked back.

That situation has given me more courage in situations to deal more fairly and open minded with all types of people. So my actual nightmare turned out to be a blessing. Not only did it give me the utmost confidence in myself but it showed me the faith and support that my bosses had in me. That type of loyalty and confidence is important in any type of business.

I feel stretched thin at times with so many demands on me and my time. Golf courses as beautiful as this one help to alleviate the stress. All it takes is time to reflect.

One long ride on a nice day, fresh air and sunshine in my face and wonderment that I can say, "I help to make all of this the way it is!"

That's reward enough.

It's a Jungle Out There

BY JOHN KOPAK
Golf Course Superintendent
Alaqua C.C.

When I arrive at work at approximately 6:30 a.m., one of the first things I do is check the phone messages. A common message may be a salesperson wanting to get together and talk about their products or an employee whose pet cat turned his or her alarm clock off by accident and they'll be running a little late.

But here at Alaqua, a common message might be,

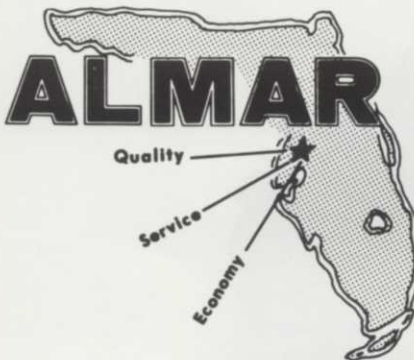
- "John, it's Chef Robert. Could you get the raccoons out of my dumpster?" or

- "John, this is Mrs. Smith. Could you please get the alligator out of my backyard? It's chasing my poodle" or

- "John, this is William at the guard

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house. I've gotten several calls about the wild pigs running down the boulevard and stopping traffic."

What???

That's right, folks. It's a jungle out there and you can add "game warden" to the list of responsibilities I hold.

The pig escapade is one of the latest of our wildlife adventures. Although I found the pigs to be most interesting creatures, they also were causing some serious damage by rooting up areas with their destructive little snouts.

After enticing them into an area with some corn and apple pie from the chef at the clubhouse, I was able to capture them and give them to a friend who raises hogs.

Explaining to Mrs. Smith that her Indian hawthorne shrubs and those pansies in her landscape are a delectable treat for the deer, and that's why she has no foliage or flowers left in front of her house, is not uncommon at all.

Nor is telling the foursome on the tenth hole that those birds in the fairway aren't buzzards, but actually wild turkeys making their way around the back nine.

One of my fondest sightings was when an eagle was sitting in a tree watching an osprey fish over a nearby pond. When the osprey caught a fish, the eagle tried to take it away in mid-air.

The osprey's mate came to the aid of his partner and kept the eagle busy while the bird with the fish made a getaway. Later on while talking to some Audubon people, I came to find out that eagles often let the other birds of prey do their work for them.

Coexisting with all of these wonderful creatures is not a burden in any way. It is truly a blessing, and everyone who has the privilege of seeing such wonders should feel fortunate.

I've learned a lot about nature while working on the golf course. I know I'll never get tired of seeing animals and birds, too numerous to name, in this great habitat that we share.



A Day in the Life of

BY JOE ONDO, CGCS

Winter Pines G.C.

Webster's definition of normal is "usual, ordinary, or typical, or the expected or usual condition." I think most superintendents, as they are driving to work, are expecting a normal day's routine, but as we all know sometimes that is not the case.

Our usual daily start and ending times are 6:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. but that changes during the longer days and other cultural practices.

Being a public golf course, the first group will usually follow the greensmower and cup setter around unless told to wait. My usual routine is to ride the course first thing to look for anything out of the ordinary, check progress on things being done, or create a list of jobs for future work.

Having a small crew, some days I will change cups, spray (spot or boom) or do the work of an employee who is sick or on vacation.

Until about four years ago I used to do all the grinding of reels and bedknives and some mechanical work. At that time my mechanic was part-time inside and part outside when needed. When he retired and went part time, we hired a full-time mechanic to take care of everything.

Having worked on equipment in the winter in Pennsylvania it came in handy for me here, but I'm glad that's done now that we have a full-time person.

The daily work schedule is posted on the bulletin board for the next day with any special instructions. We do not have many crew meetings since I am able to work with and communicate one-on-one with all my employees. After the morning schedule, special instructions are given for a certain job to be done, if need be, or a note on the board.

We try to schedule any major renovation a few days after any special men's or ladies' association tournaments. Being public, our schedule is pretty flexible and usually nine holes are open so

we can work on the other and have it back in play as soon as possible.

If bad weather is predicted, the pro shop will usually need two days advance notice to schedule tee times or we will wait another week to do our work.

I usually go over prices and verification of items purchased at least once a week with the owner, who is also the manager. We also discuss anything he would like to see done or future projects I have in mind for the course.

We have been rebuilding number one green for a year to convert the contaminated 328 to Tifdwarf. We have rebuilt six greens on the course and one putting green, with one on the course and one putting green left to do.

I attend as many monthly chapter meetings as I can, and pick and choose seminars so I can keep my CEUs up to date for recertification.

I am fortunate in that three of my six employees have been here over 17 years, so when I'm gone things usually don't miss a beat.

When I attend a conference or am on vacation, each employee has a list of job assignments to do and an alternate list if

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bad weather or an equipment problem occurs. Everyone is pretty careful because they know if something breaks, it is usually flymo work or hand labor of some sort as their next job.

I play in as many amateur golf tournaments as my schedule and money allow. Most are on weekends but sometimes one will be during the week, so I have to watch how much I am gone from work.

We have had our share of irrigation blowouts, sprinklers that run all night when and where you least need it, hydraulic leaks and other incidents that give you a little more gray hair — or no