

# Shades Of Green

■ OPINION

**I**t's been a busy summer at my home course, Lake Omigosh Country Club, here in central Florida. A lot of our members went north to escape the heat even though that didn't work too well this year with the heat wave that blasted them while they were there. I'll bet they'll be cranky when they get back down here.

The brown spots on the fairways from three years of drought are no longer visible. They're submerged under 3 inches of water from the wettest year since 1997. Mother Nature has a cruel sense of humor and no compassion for a superintendent's lot in life as a target for all the frustrations from the would-be Tigers who expect perfection no matter what.

The environmentalists are happy, though, since several hundred acres of new wetlands have been created, and the flocks of ducks and wading birds making use of the new temporary ponds are grateful for the new habitats. We're always glad when the environmentalists are happy, I guess. The only upside for our superintendent Duffy McDuffy, however, is that the earthworms in the fairways are drowning, but Duffy is keeping that quiet because the self-same environmentalists might insist that he install extra drainage to save the poor dears.

That said, Duffy would like to install more drainage to keep the fairways playable (the course was closed 47 days this summer when heavy rains buffeted the area), but the Building Committee wants to replace the 3-year-old carpet in the clubhouse instead because it now clashes with the floral wallpaper hung by Mabel Phipps and her group last year.

Speaking of Mabel, she and her Beautification Committee were also responsible for the addition of the flower-pots-for-tee-markers project two years ago. Poor Duffy nearly drove himself mad finding and keeping enough of the right colored flowers on hand for the red, white, blue, gold and black tees, but he managed to muddle through anyhow.

When Mel Crowder, the green chairman, suggested that Duffy just use pots of dead flowers for the black tees, Mabel took exception and it was quite tense around the clubhouse for a couple of weeks. The four low handicappers who actually play from those tees have

## That's the News From Lake Omigosh

BY JOEL JACKSON



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graciously accepted dark-violet pansies as close enough, thus ending the dispute.

Another problem from this wet summer has been the surge of weed growth. Every time poor Duffy tries to spray the weeds it seems to bring on a thunderstorm and dilute the effects — and the weeds stretch on as far as the eye can see. The crew is trying to carefully hand-pick the weeds in the putting surfaces and dig out the big ones that become trip hazards on the tee slopes and fairways, but it's an uphill battle every day.

Duffy confided in me that he's getting quite concerned about the coming fall season and the return of the members. With the persistent inclement weather conditions, the par-3 tee-leveling project is way behind schedule, and it's really time for him to start preparing the course with a fall aeration to get ready for overseeding.

With lost revenues because of bad weather and a slow economy, the work schedule is in shambles. Duffy says he's polishing up his resume and he added, "You know how the Colonel is when he comes back from summering up at Firestone."

"The Colonel" is Club President for Life Colonel Atremus P. Blodgett, U.S. Army (Ret.) and former head of Special Services (not to be confused with Special Forces). "Special Services" is in charge of Army post exchanges, commissaries and occasionally golf courses, which is why the Colonel fancies himself an expert on golf course grooming. Or has he likes to say, "Listen McDuffy! It's not rocket science. Just water it, fertilize it and mow it!"

We'll visit Lake Omigosh again after the holidays. Until then Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to one and all.

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*Certified superintendent Joel Jackson retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.*