

# Hobbies: A Stress-Relief Valve

Joel Purpur  
River Forest C.C.

When I was volunteered by the Education Committee chairman to submit an article for "Ask the Expert," at first I thought that I was to give some enlightening information on a subject that I am an expert on. I thought for awhile, and the only thing I could come up with was that some consider me an expert on maintaining my annual ski vacations after three kids and eleven years of marriage. I'm also good at playing with the kids and usually get yelled at before they do. While the young ones are priceless, I am looking forward to all of our children being out of diapers so we can go on *family* ski vacations too.

This time of year, I can only assume that most people in our industry are burned out from a seemingly endless summer of either supplying golf courses or baby-sitting a golf course day and night trying to keep turf alive. Instead of writing about an expert's "technical stuff," I will write about what keeps me going between seasons. Other than my family, my hobbies keep the motor running.

Hobbies are an important part of stress relief, especially being in the golf business. We continually have to give up so much during the summer. Anyone who has talked to me for any length of time will usually hear me start to babble about one of my interests: flying airplanes. Being a pilot is one of my methods for escape. Especially during the summer months, I enjoy flying over golf courses and seeing how everyone is doing turfwise and, on

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*l-r: Hayden and Joel Purpur*

*Photo by Fred Opperman*

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some occasions, floodwise. You can't hide a lot from the air. You can see some pretty interesting things.


This can work against you in some cases. Mike Sauls at Butler National had to move a cart path along their 17th tee because a former green chairman did not like the way it looked from a jet while on final approach into O'Hare! Wow, that's a new one!

Flying the golf courses during periods of drought can also be interesting. Problems associated with poor sprinkler coverage and patterns can be easily seen when conditions are right. Drain lines can sometimes be easily seen during drought conditions as well by the variance in grass color above the drain tile versus the surrounding turf.

Aerial photographs of construction projects are also pretty cool. Dave Blomquist of Naperville Country Club asked me to fly his assistant (Tim Anderson at that time) and take a few overhead shots during his practice facility project. Small planes are not for everyone, and Dave, not being one who is comfortable even in a big plane, said, "I was getting queasy just watching you," as we did some steep turns above him to get at a better angle. Tim took some pictures, Dave got some shots that he wanted, and I got to get in some flying time. What fun. I would be glad to arrange a flight for anyone who wants to see their course from the air, or just fly around for the thrill of it.

If you want *high quality* aerial photographs, you are better off hiring a professional service. They are not that expensive. I had the pleasure of flying with Allen Gold-

stein of Aerial Images Photography, and I can tell you that you will get better results with a professional service. Some of the *On Course* aerials were done by his company as well as shots of my home course, River Forest Country Club. On the other hand, if the thought of flying gives you a thrill, let's go up, and you can bring the camera along.

Hobbies (except golf) can help dramatically to reduce stress. Flying an airplane, for me and my family, is a great way to get away from it all and forget about difficult members, *Poa annua*, golf cart decisions . . . WORK. People NEED hobbies to maintain their sanity. Don't forget the importance of your outside interests. I don't. If you want to try flying and get a bird's-eye view, call me. 

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