

# Michael Mumper -N- Arrowhead Golf Club

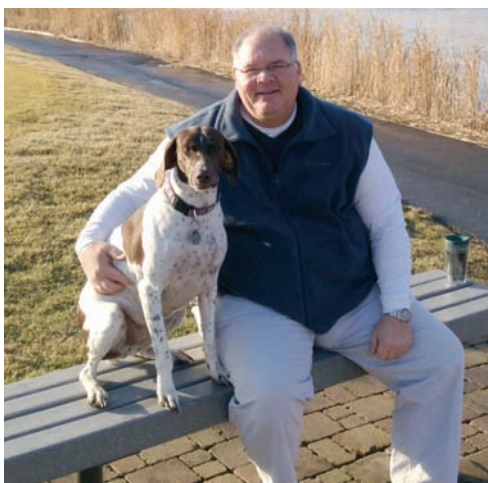
*Mike Mumper is known as MUMPS or maybe just as the big guy with the happy grin on his face. Either way, golf course superintendents and assistants want to be around his contagious enthusiasm, happiness, and passion for the golf industry. Most superintendents know his background but some of us younger guys don't. We might not realize the dedication and eagerness it takes to become a golf course superintendent. Mike Mumper has these attributes a hundredfold.*

Mike started his career on the other side of the ball as an operations manager at Links of Monarch Beach, in California. He found himself hanging out with the golf course superintendent, Brian Sullivan, and in his free time helping out the grounds crew. Mike thought that Brian had his life figured out as they were sailing on his boat, drinking margaritas, and listening to Jimmy Buffet. Mike said, "Brian, I want to do what you do." Brian thought about it for a minute then responded, "If you're serious, then you need to get a degree and work in Chicago, because if you can grow grass there you can grow grass anywhere."

Mike didn't hesitate. He sold everything that didn't fit in his car and drove to Chicago in hopes of finding a golf course grounds position to get him started. Brian had suggested that he talk to Dave Ward, Bruce Williams, Brian Bossert, and Danny Quast to steer him in the right direction. Their advice, along with their crystal ball, pointed him north.

He focused on Skokie Country Club and demanded the tutelage of Don Cross. Come to find out, maybe Don wasn't interested in some kid from California. Mike continued to pursue a grounds crew position with Don. Eventually Don took the inexperienced soul in and gave him the test of filling divots and edging drainage covers. Mike fell in love with the detail of the task, and still claims he was the best divot filler Skokie CC has ever had.

Don, in his first year as superintendent at Skokie, valued Mike's passion and allowed him to stay in the dorms at Skokie



Mike and Lilly

CC during the winter. Once he became a grounds crew member it was too late to register for the turf program at Michigan State University. Mike only made \$5.50 at Skokie, and winter was approaching. He had to find other work to make it through the winter. His dedication would be tested again when he found himself loading UPS trucks to keep food on the table.

Finally arriving at MSU, Mike met his partner in crime, Dave Radaj. Dave and Mike ruled the campus of MSU as kings in their own world. They even figured out how to manipulate the MSU housing system. They were granted married housing together to save money for "Labatt Blue." In their short time spent at MSU, they built a friendship that would last forever.

Mike graduated from MSU with the highest honors that Crunches and Roadhouse Pub could offer. Then he headed back to be the Assistant Superintendent at Skokie CC. While the assistant at Skokie, Mike focused on gaining all the knowledge he could get from Don. Don figured a good learning experience would be for the crew to gang up on Mike and throw him in the pond. When asking Mike if this story was true, he chuckled and said, "I remember that day, and I also remember taking Don down into the pond as well."

Mike quickly found himself in a position to become a golf course superintendent. He accepted his first superintendent position at Ravisloe Country Club, which then led him to Park Ridge Country Club, Lake Shore Country Club, and now Arrowhead Golf Club. Mike's golf course superintendent career has been an adventure. With his knowledge and personable

*(continued on page 16)*







attitude, he has become the mentor that he sought out years ago and has been influential in many lives.

Along with all the dedication and passion that Mike has put into the golf industry, he has received some of the highest honors. None is higher than the friendship of so many superintendents, members, owners, salespeople and staff. He is an accomplished superintendent. Any assistant superintendent that crosses paths with him sees that we work hard to be part of this Family, the golf industry. It's the people within it that make it great. **-OC**

