

# The Golf Course Superintendent

by MAUREEN KOOYER

**A**S wives of golf course superintendents I'm sure most of us know the pleasures and pains of the profession. One of the biggest pleasures for me is to see Don enjoy his work the way he does. It is not a job-it is an integrated part of his-and our-lives.

Most superintendents I have met and have come to know are the most satisfied career people I have ever met. True, they have many aggravations-what job doesn't?-but they seem to be truly happy with their lives.

To me that is amazing! Being up at the crack of dawn, digging in muddy ditches, fighting insects, and mowing continuously just doesn't sound like a thrilling time. And that says nothing of trying to please tens of thousands of golfers every year.

I think that most superintendents must have an amazing sense of humor. To put up with such outrageous demands in the workplace certainly takes a unique personality.

Job changes are another factor to deal with in the superintendents profession. I believe that I've heard superintendents change jobs on the average of once every 3 years. While this is a national average and definitely not true of all of us, it does show a field full of range.

When job changes involve a new city or state, I truly believe the superintendent's family has the toughest end of the deal. The superintendent has a job to slide right into. Wives have to job-hunt, register kids in new schools, find doctors, dentists, babysitters-the list is endless. And all of this must be accomplished

solo as the husband is busy orientating himself at the new course. Meanwhile, you have kids who are unhappy with leaving their friends and familiarity behind, and it seems as though all the pressure is put on you. I've found that with time, patience and perseverance, all works out well. It is a challenge to me now-to find a house, schools, a new job. But I also find the older I get, the more I would like to be settled somewhere. I wonder if that is possible in this profession?

Along with all of this comes the constant need for the superintendent to stay on top of his career through education. The profession is rapidly becoming a competitive market. Twenty years ago a superintendent was much more likely to have on-the-job training. The trend these days is college. No longer is it true that

*Continued on p. 48*

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**THE MORE SATISFIED HE IS AT WORK—THE MORE SATISFIED HE IS AT HOME. I CAN TELL BY HIS MOODS WHETHER HE HAS HAD A GOOD OR BAD DAY AT WORK.**

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sons follow their fathers by learning on the course. Boys who wish to follow their dad's footsteps now attend college with many more earning degrees every year.

Being a certified superintendent is another feather in the cap of a superintendent. Along with the most difficult certification test, to remain certified means following up on it constantly. There are conventions to attend, with classes held at the conventions. All of this is an important part of being a superintendent. That is not to say that those who are not certified are any less professional. That is simply not true! It is up to each individual to decide the importance of the certification for themselves. It was important to Don to be certified, and it has done well for him. He knows many more superintendents that are *not* certified than are and all are doing equally well with their careers.

I don't always understand the intensity with which Don approaches his livelihood—he sometimes seems possessed by golf courses—but I do try to encourage and understand. The more satisfied he is with work—the more satisfied he is at home. I can tell by his moods whether he has had a good or bad day at work. Many times at night or on the weekend he's gone out to the course to "check something out". All a part of life as a superintendent!

I have noticed an interesting thing with superintendents. We attended the annual N.F.G.C.S.A. Christmas party at Ponce de Leon Lodge in December. It was more formal than the usual parties and the men were in suits and ties. Most of them looked uncomfortable in their suits—outdoor men just don't dress up! I'm sure there were many sighs of relief when the ties came off!

Life is never dull as a golf course superintendent—as the wives and families all know. But it is an interesting and changeable life that keeps us all happy!

For anyone considering this profession as a career, it seems to me to be a rewarding one. Just bring along your knowledge and patience! You'll be happy with it I think. ■

## Year-round Sunglasses Use Urged

In preparation for summer, sun worshippers usually update their beach-going equipment, including buying a new pair of sunglasses when necessary.

Experts in the eyewear field advise us that sunglasses should be part of our outdoor life year-round, not just during the bright and sunny summer months.

"The basic reason (to wear sunglasses) is for the protection of the eyes against burn or cataracts and to make you more comfortable (by reducing the amount of light reaching the eye)," said Phillip L. Kaufman, vice president of the Illinois Optometric Association and a practicing optometrist.

The spectrum of light consists of different wave lengths ranging from ultraviolet at one end to infrared at the other, with a visible range in the middle, Kaufman said.

"The two types of light that do damage to your eyes are the ultraviolet and the infrared. What most (non-prescription) sunglasses will filter out is the visible spectrum, but not the infrared and ultraviolet. In order to get both the infrared and ultraviolet, one has to wear optically manufactured lenses with special dyes for tints that block out the harmful rays."

Another problem with buying over-the-counter sunglasses at the local drug or variety store is that many of the lenses are distorted.

"Hold up a pair of real cheap sunglasses, about a foot away and see for yourself," said Kaufman. "If the line of the lens is not perfectly straight from top to bottom and right to left (or the edge distorts, sways, curves or moves), that lens has some distortion in it and can make you uncomfortable. However, the human visual system is so miserably adaptable that patients learn to adapt to them."

Sunglasses have become very fashionable, Kaufman said.

"And they (consumers) are exposing themselves to conditions for fashion's sake and getting away from the protective value of sunglasses, and that is not good." ■

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