

SMILE!

## Supers' candid cameras can be crucial to job

By J. BARRY MOTHES

You don't have to be the next Ansel Adams. But understanding how and when to use a camera on and around the golf course could make you a far more effective superintendent.

As the old cliché goes, a picture is worth a thousand words, and this can be especially true when it comes to a golf course. Good, clear, well-taken photographs and slides can provide crucial information and documentation for everything from turf diseases to irrigation projects and plantings.

They can be a valuable tool when meeting with greens committees, club managers, and even insurance companies.

"It's saved me," says Pat Lewis, superintendent at the private Donald Ross-designed Portland Country Club on the southern Maine coast. "It's given my greens committee a better outlook on my job. When they look at photographs

"I've taken it shows more than a written report that we've made tremendous improvements to the course. It gives me the authority to continue what we're doing."

Lewis says he started using a camera as part of the job 11 years ago. He now keeps it (a Pentax with manual and automatic capabilities) and several rolls of color film handy in his desk in the maintenance shop to carry with him on his daily rounds.

Last summer, Lewis used the camera to record an ongoing irrigation project, several brush and undergrowth clearings, two major tee construction

projects, and hundreds of plantings on the course and around the clubhouse. He and his staff also used the camera to capture the broad variety of birds, animals, plants, trees and bushes on the grounds as part of an application to the Audubon Society's Cooperative Golf Course Sanctuary program. Thanks partly to the photographs, the club has been certified in four of the six categories.

Several camera-toting superintendents say photographs and slides can be particularly effective for:

- tracking and documenting turf diseases over short, medium or long periods of times.
- documenting the "before" and "after" for golf course construction, renovation or restructuring projects like greens, bunkers, tees, bridges, paths and plantings.
- documenting changes in sunlight on important areas like greens.
- tracking "works-in-progress," especially projects like irrigation that are eventually buried beyond sight.
- documenting machinery and valuable equipment.

Terry Buchen says he takes a picture of "everything" he and his crew use so that he can provide better evidence of ownership in case of damages or theft for insurance purposes.

Buchen, a 24-year veteran superintendent who says he "always has a camera" with him and keeps two cameras ready at all times (one with print film,

Continued on next page



Using a camera can record such problems as this strip of dark green fairway. It was caused by a natural source of nitrogen.

## Choosing the correct camera is pivotal to superintendent's success

By J. BARRY MOTHES

Choosing a new camera can be confusing business. But understanding what kind of camera you need is the best way to start making photography work for you as a golf course superintendent.

The "point and shoot" cameras, the small, pocket-size automatics that are popular tourist cameras, are obviously easy to use. But except for increasingly sophisticated models made by top-of-the-line manufacturers like Nikon, Olympus

and even Leica — those that start at \$200 and up with zoom lenses — these are not really the best camera for the job. If you insist on the convenience and size of these cameras, make sure you're looking at the \$200 price point and above.

Otherwise, your prints will probably not do justice to your hard work. Beyond that, most camera dealers don't even recommend shooting slide film in "point-and-shoot" situations except for higher-end models.

Probably the best type of camera, for overall clarity, quality and flexibility, is a single-lens reflex camera. Automatic "SLRs" start at about \$350 with the average price somewhere between \$400 and \$500.

Almost all camera manufacturers make a single-lens reflex camera with an automatic exposure function, which takes away the possibility of error.

Most of these cameras now come with automatic focusing and zoom lenses that

give you all sorts of options depending on the demands of the subject. Once you have an "SLR" you can build a collection of lenses for different situations, or rely on one zoom with more range than you could get on a small point-and-shoot.

For the knowledgeable purist — or budding purist — you might consider a simple manual SLR camera or at least learning the manual function available on most automatics.

This requires you to choose your own aperture and shutter speed, the two essential variables when taking a photograph the manual way. Aperture determines how much light will be let in to expose the negative, shutter speed determines how long that amount of light will be let in (usually somewhere between 1/50th to 1/500th of a second).

There are several advantages to knowing how to take pictures manually with a single-lens reflex camera. Once you understand the basic principles of photography, you can then adjust the camera to take the best possible photograph in every instance, rather than relying on the average "decisions" the camera makes when it is in the automatic mode.

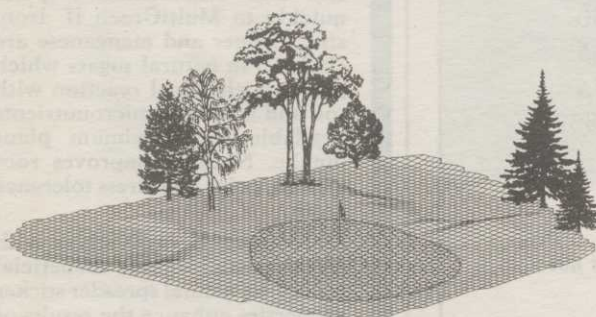
You can take pictures that will crisply identify subjects in the foreground, mid-ground or background, or take pictures of subjects in areas that would be considered too "dark" in the automatic mode.

As far as buying print or slide film, just remember, assuming there's enough natural light, the slower the film speed the better the fidelity.

Good "slower" film for golf course photography would be 100 ASA to 200 ASA. The best way to find the right film is experiment — fire off two different rolls of film of the same subject or subjects one right after another — and compare the results.

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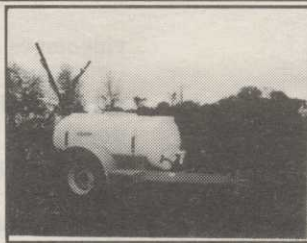
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