

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,

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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.

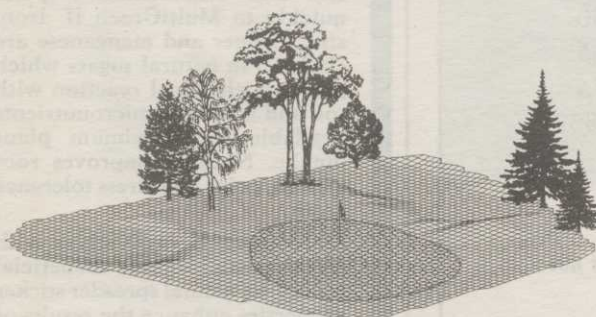
You can take pictures that will crisply identify subjects in the foreground, mid-ground or background, or take pictures of subjects in areas that would be considered too "dark" in the automatic mode.

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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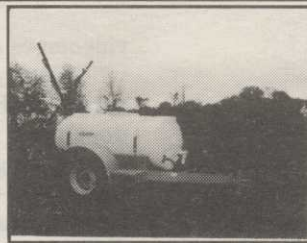
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LITERATURE

**EARTH-SAFE
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POWNAI, Vt. — Don't be deceived by its title, the new book *"The Gardener's Guide to Plant Diseases"* contains a number of techniques and tips for dealing with problems encountered on the golf course.

From airborne to plant pathogens, from viruses to bacteria, author Barbara Pleasant covers a gamut of problems — and offers "earth-safe remedies." While turfgrass problems are not on her menu, many horticultural concerns are.

Each chapter begins with a general discussion of the "culprits," followed by an alphabetical listing of diseases associated with them.

The book is available in paperback for \$12.95 at bookstores, or from the publisher for \$14.90, by contacting Storey Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 445, Pownal, Vt. 05261; 800-441-5700.

SEED-TO-BLOOM SIMPLIFIED

POWNAI, Vt. — From abronia to zinnia, author Eileen Powell has filled in the blanks on sowing, germinating, planting, maintaining and propagating every plant you might landscape a golf course with in a new book from Storey Communications.

"From Seed to Bloom" is a comprehensive encyclopedic look at more than 500 annuals, perennials and even herbs. Powell is the proprietor of Secret Gardens Landscaping and lives in Arlington, Va. She holds a certificate in landscape design from George Washington University.

The book is available for \$18.95 in bookstores in paperback, or for \$20.90 from Storey Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 445, Pownal, Vt. 05261; 800-441-5700.

Leslie comment: A little praise, a little censure

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Pennington absorbed, or the time, energy and frustration.

This was a pure and unadulterated case supporting Lewis H. Lapham's claim that "the supply of government exceeds the demand."

As the epicenter of an earthquake lies at the core of trauma on this earth, so Washington, D.C., is indeed the epicenter of some very queer, tumultuous behavior. We can only hope and pray the new Congress does affect change. It is apparently trying. Witness legislative measures that would require a reasonable cost-benefit ratio before new laws are enacted, and that lawmakers stay clear of bills that would give bureaucrats reign over such workplace issues as ergonomics.

This relates to golf from the clubhouse (remember the states legislating how much space ladies' rooms should have compared to men's rooms?) to the fairway (remember the no-chemical edict to Squaw Creek in California?).

And I recall former Wild Dunes owner David Lucas declaring that our government is "tyranny by legislative fiat and special-interest groups." Lucas, who formed the Council on Property Rights, can attest to the fact that the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 was merely a 19th-century prelude to 20th-century land grabs by enviro-driven government. He needed to go to the U.S. Supreme Court to beat his own state of South Carolina, which had tried to prevent him from building a home on beach-front property — though it was flanked on either side by homes.

Yet, I would not be so unkind as to agree with Honore de Balzac's assessment: "Bureaucracy is a giant mechanism operated by pygmies." Nor would I be so

brazen as to agree with Ludwig van Moses' statement: "Government is the only institution that can take a valuable commodity like paper and make it worthless by applying ink." Well, I'll agree with van Moses.

A how-to-go! to Augusta National superintendent Marsh Benson and Double Eagle Club superintendent Terry Buchen, a GCN contributing editor, for finishing 1-2 in the nation in conditioning, as judged by Golf Digest panelists. GD's Ron Whitten wrote: "Perfection, thy name is Augusta National. But among courses actually open for play during summer months, the surprise is Double Eagle near Columbus, Ohio. How plush is it? They run Stimpmeter tests on the tees."

Wouldn't you like to trade places for a while with Masters Chairman Jack Stevens and Vice Chairman Joe Ford? They are members of both Augusta National and Double Eagle.

Following up in the Top 10 maintenance poll are Pine Valley, Muirfield Village in Ohio, Oakmont, Shadow Creek, Cypress Point, Merion's East Course, Inverness in Ohio and The Quarry at La Quinta, Calif.

Paul, we coulda loved ya'... Oh, well. Mentioning Paul Harvey's comparison of the U.S. Golf Association to the to-

bacco industry, a friend said, "That's like comparing nuns to Nazis."

What's in a name?

Speaking at the Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association annual conference, Dr. Joe Vargas said: "The biggest mistake we ever made was that we started calling things we used to control plant diseases 'pesticides.' People who use things to control human diseases call them 'medicine.' It doesn't matter that you are controlling a bacterial disease in a person or on a plant, you use a bactericide. It doesn't matter if you are controlling a fungal disease on a plant or on a person, you are using a fungicide. But, unfortunately, when we use them on a plant we call them pesticides... And there is a perception out there that medicines are good and pesticides are bad, when in reality they are oftentimes the same chemistry."

Hints aside from Vargas in Ottawa:

- When putting fertilizer in a sand-type environment, use either a slow-release fertilizer or one that is soluble where you are putting down limited amounts, so that the fibrous root system can pick it up.

- Thatch is very good at preventing pesticide leaching. "Remember all these years we told you thatch was bad?" he said "Well, now we're telling you thatch is good."

Never stop taking pictures, Lewis says

Continued from previous page

the other with slide film), says slides are ideal for presentations to greens committees, especially if you can get two slide projectors working side-by-side.

A good place to begin or improve your understanding of a camera, as Buchen himself did, is in an introductory photography class at your local college, museum or vocational-technical school.

A typical introductory class, where you might even learn to develop and print your own film (black and white), might meet once or twice a week for about 12 weeks.

You might be surprised at just how much you can learn, and how exciting, and practical, photography can be.

As Buchen says, once you get the camera working, there's practically nothing on or around your golf course that isn't worth taking a picture of. Buchen says he shoots at least one 36-exposure roll of film a week.

And it doesn't have to be all business. Lewis, in Portland, Maine, and his wife, Linda, take candid shots of the grounds crew staff throughout each summer and then lay them out in a framed display in the maintenance shop as a memento.

"One thing I've learned over the years is never stop taking pictures," says Lewis. "There were a couple years I didn't take as many and I wished I had."

The best times of day to take your pictures are early morning (sunrise to 9 a.m.) and late afternoon (4 p.m. to dusk), when the sunlight is angled instead of directly overhead, and not too bright.

"The shadows are the best at those times," says Buchen, "and shadows make everything. I like to take pictures sometimes real early in the morning, with the dew still on the course and no vehicle tracks anywhere."

Another sensible tip Buchen passed along was placing a pen or pencil or a coin in your subject areas, like a "trouble" spot on a green for example, to help give a sense of size and perspective to your photograph.

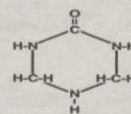
Whether it's for prints or slides, for the scrapbook or the slide projector, photography can play a key role in understanding and explaining the tasks and challenges facing a golf course superintendent and his or her staff every day.

"To really be thorough," says Buchen, "it's the best way to make a presentation. It's a lot of work. But hard work pays off."

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