

Down and Dirty

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"Volunteers are most enthusiastic when they're actually doing something," O'Leary says. "You have to make sure you don't have idle hands because they'll be less likely to come back next time you need them."

The other vital factor in mobilizing volunteers is to make the job fun, O'Leary says. In return for a little effort on her part, she has saved the course thousands of dollars in labor costs with her small, dedicated army of volunteers.

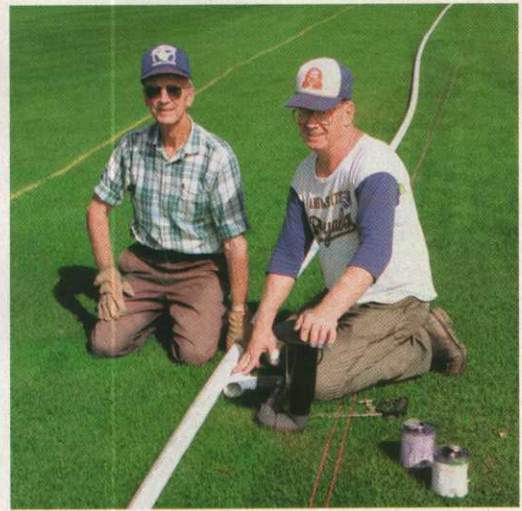
Since 1990, O'Leary's volunteers have averaged 300 hours per year, with a peak of 500 hours in 1991 during the irrigation system installation. This saves the course between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per year in labor costs.

"We make sure we thank them and let them know their work is appreciated," she adds. "If you combine that with a sense of pride after a project is

completed, it's a powerful motivator."

Think about how powerful it would be to have your members take new interest and ownership of your course in a way they may not now. Think of the opportunities to educate them about what you do during volunteer days like those O'Leary sponsors. Think about the new respect you might garner from those members — and then think of the money you'll save.

Silver Bay GC is proof that the methods work. O'Leary says the next project, once the city finishes purchasing an extra 24 acres, is to build nine more holes to make the course a complete 18-hole facility — and she expects to do most of the work with her volunteer corps.



Two Silver Bay volunteers lay irrigation pipe during a new system installation.

"We know we can do a fair job building those extra nine holes," O'Leary says. "And we know we'll save the club a lot of money so we can stay within the budget."

Here's betting that O'Leary and her volunteers in an old mining town with its blue-collar work ethic will make it happen. ■

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Two aliens, hovering in a spaceship high above a golf course, observed in amazement as a novice practiced his game.

The golfer duffed his tee shot, shanked his second into the rough, took three to get out of the rough onto the fairway, sliced the next shot into the bushes, then used a putter to get it out on the fairway again.

Above him in the ship, one alien told the other that the man must be playing a sport of some kind. They continued to observe him closely, fascinated.

The golfer hit a great shot into a bunker by the green. He took several shots to get out of the bunker and finally onto the green. He putted several times, and finally got the ball into the hole.

At which point the other alien turned to his partner and said, "Wow. He's in *serious* trouble, now."

