



# The Simple Pleasures of a Golf Course

By Monroe S. Miller

The list of things most of us like about managing a golf course would probably run for pages. That list would include everything from feature construction to tournament preparation to everyday problem solving. The between things might be the most interesting.

I was thinking the other day about the simple pleasures that come along at work, day to day through the Wisconsin seasons. The thought of such simple pleasures put a smile on my face, and I was reminded of all the variety that makes this such a rich and enjoyable career.

So here are a few of my simple pleasures. Can you relate?

- Watching a hundred kids on the range on a Friday morning, with moms and dads, learning to play golf. What fun!

- Driving onto the golf course in the early morning in the autumn and smelling wood smoke from one of the neighbors' fireplace. It could be the best smell on earth.

- Being at the pumphouse in the summer and catching the sunrise over the waters of Lake Mendota.

- Driving to work in the dark when the moon is full, looking like it touches Century Avenue. It is hard to believe it was so long ago that Americans walked on the moon.

- Being in the clubhouse kitchen when the bakery chef is pulling a sheet of fresh, hot chocolate chip cookies from the oven, begging a few and eating them on the spot with a glass of ice cold milk.

- Mowing a green with a walking green mower. It is the best planning time, stress reliever and exercise I know. And so few know about it!

- Filling my empty coffee cup with fresh ripe mulberries, putting my feet up on the cart deck and enjoying them, one by one.

- Stopping by a mockorange or a Koreanspice viburnum in the spring when they are in peak bloom and

getting a rush from the aroma of their flowers.

- Taking a cup of fresh brewed black coffee, in my favorite cup, out to the golf course with me, early in the morning, and enjoying it all by myself while I am checking the course.

- Looking at the sun through the water being thrown by a Toro 650 sprinkler, early in the morning when the angle of the light is low. Beautiful! And it looks so refreshing!

- Standing back and looking at a just finished sod job, noting that there is not one overlapped seam. Perfect! And so green . . . .

- Knowing that, after the 4th of July fireworks, my worst day of the year is over.

- Watching the crew work, at mid-season, to get ready for a tournament that begins at 8:00 a.m. They function like a well oiled machine, and the results are just great.

- Watching the chairman drop a birdie putt into the cup on the first green!

- Listening to the first locusts and crickets of the season sing; it tells me that autumn will be here before I know it.

- Cutting pine lumber with a table saw. The sawdust offers one of earth's best aromas. It is a similar treat to plant a fragrant white pine tree, or to park in the midst of a group of mature white pines on a humid morning. The smell is intoxicating!

- Waking up on a summer night to the sound of a soft rainfall. It makes me smile, knowing the next day will be easier.

- Waiting patiently for July 28th, the date in Madison when the average daily high temperature finally starts to drop. Cooler days are ahead.

- Stretching a fungicide application through some tough pythium and brown patch weather and not having either disease appear. There is satisfaction in a good decision that saves a boat load of money.

- A visit by Wayne Kussow. He is a busy man and doesn't stop often, adding to the pleasure of the times when he does.

- Getting to work at daylight to spray fairways and finding them white with dew. It is even better when you arrive and the air is dead calm. "No marker and no dye today."

- Announcing to the world that one of our bluebird houses has an occupant for which it was built!

- Looking overhead, in the fall, and watching a skein of geese flying south. "Snow before long," I smile to myself.

- Tree flowers in the spring, big green leaves in the summer, and bright colors in the fall.

- Writing a letter of recommendation for an outstanding graduate, faithful summer employee and future golf course superintendent.

- Watching the first snow fall on the golf course—irrigation system is empty, snow mold materials are down, and there is no ice anywhere on the course.

- Seeing a new issue of THE GRASS ROOTS when it is fresh off the press.

- Rolling three golf balls with a stimpmeter and having them all touch, at about 10 feet away. "No grumbling accepted today." ♣

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