

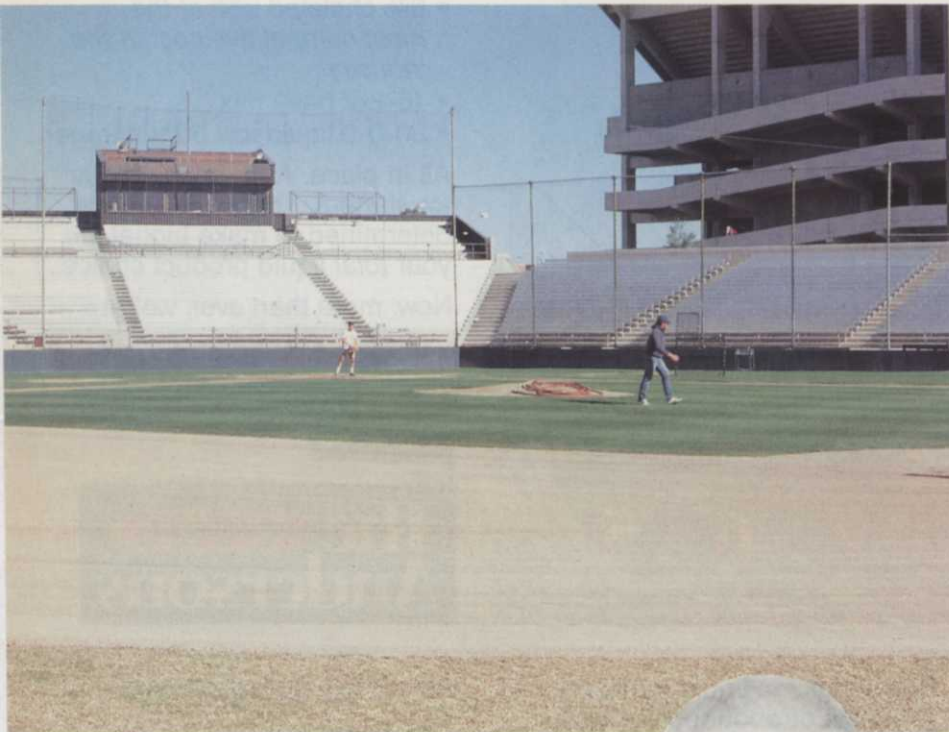
LANDSCAPE PROFILE

ALMOST A NATIVE

University of Arizona grounds supervisor Chuck Raetzman left Chicago 30 years ago for the sun of the desert southwest.

After the first winter, he never wanted to go back.

by Ken Kuhajda, managing editor



This winter shot of the baseball field shows the lush green overseeded infield and dormant outfield.

Chuck Raetzman came from Illinois on a football scholarship and stayed.

Thirty years later, still built like a jock, Chuck Raetzman keeps his hand in sports as the assistant director of operations services in the physical resources division at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Translation? He maintains all grounds including the football and baseball fields at the PAC-10 school where the sun shines 340 days a year.

"Basically I'm responsible for custodial, grounds, and labor. Two years ago I inherited the custodial part," says Raetzman, still trim and youthful at age 48. He carries 195 pounds on his 6-1 frame.

The grey hairs are there. They come with experience. He's 35 without them.

He's in his 18th year at the U of A, a medium-sized school (enrollment 27,000) with a pleasant, self-contained city campus.

He's one of some 800 employees within physical resources and one of five supervisors who report directly to Phil Rector, director of physical resources.

He manages a budget of \$3 million, 80 percent coming from the state and the rest from local departments on campus which pay for maintenance services.



Bob Kneebone, retired turfgrass professor at the University of Arizona (left), has served as Raetzman's advisor for some 18 years. Raetzman, (right), is assistant director of operations services at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

"I like to equate it with a small construction company," says Raetzman.

It's also a huge bureaucracy, he says, and not always easy to get the equipment and materials you need.

You make do. "There's been four different directors since 1968. Each one has reorganized," says Raetzman. "But things are working out well."

The Mac Attack

Maintaining a "for-profit" college can be a tough job.

Take September, 1977 for example. Chuck Raetzman and crew prepare for the regionally-televised home football opener. The field looks great.

Two weeks before the big game, the rock band Fleetwood Mac, then at the top of the rock world, plays a concert at the football stadium.

Big bucks for the university. Big headaches for Raetzman and crew.

Some 76,000 people attend, 56,000 in the stands and the rest on the beautiful bermudagrass turf.

The port-a-potties are located at the south end of the field.

The next day dawns. The morning is carved in Raetzman's memory.

The field, a total disaster, was like concrete from the pounding of 20,000 rock fans. The natural aisle formed in the middle of the field from goal line to goal line was yellow from the constant footsteps of potty-goers.

Glass, debris, cigarette butts, and yes, marijuana seeds littered the field. (Says Raetzman, able to smile today: "We had the greatest crop of marijuana growing after that concert.")

Raetzman and crew cried a lot and then did what they could. The turf didn't come back. The field had to be painted the entire season.

Rock concerts, as expected, are not one of Chuck Raetzman's favorite activities.

Nonetheless, he predicts a concert sometime this spring. Today's standard fare of the geo-textile fabric and plywood should prevent a recurrence of the Mac Attack.

"Even with the cover you're still going to get damage. Plus the clean-up. Here, you attract from four states and then they camp out all week," says Raetzman.

He gives thanks he doesn't maintain a public facility like



Chuck Raetzman

'There are still people on campus after 4. They get to talk to our custodial workers. It helps with PR a little bit.'

—Raetzman

Denver's Mile High Stadium, where they depend solely on concerts and special attractions for revenues.

300 employees

Some 60 U of A employees maintain the grounds, including the athletic fields, at the central Tucson campus. Custodial workers total 200 while 24 general laborers, "a support group," maintain the campus.

That's almost 300 workers under Raetzman. They come in waves—two shifts—which Raetzman says makes for better public relations.

Second shift begins at 4 p.m. "There are still people on campus after 4," he says. "They get to talk to our custodial workers. It helps with PR a little bit."

Tucson's semi-arid climate provides plenty of work. The area, at 2,400 ft., gets just 11 inches of rain per year. The growing season lasts 264 days. That's a lot of mowing, trimming, and watering.

A four-man crew handles irrigation, almost a non-stop activity

during the 100 degree heat of the southeast Arizona summer.

There's also a six-man sanitation crew. The boss, Raetzman, oversees the entire operation, calling on his three supervisors: Bill Carter (grounds), Mike Mencinger (labor), and Ron Roberts (custodial).

His personal background is in horticulture. He graduated from the U of A in 1960 with a horticulture degree and worked eight years for a landscape contractor in Tucson before returning to his alma mater.

From the snow to the sun

He came to Arizona from Chicago, where he was an all-city offensive and defensive guard at Amundsen High School (everyone played both ways in the days of leather helmets).

"It was a chance to see another area of the country, to get out of my own," he says. "I had travelled through Tucson before I went to school there and it was so different. The palm trees, the citrus, the weather. It was a chance for me to get out west."

In 1955, Raetzman and another Chicago-area player, also on scholarship at the U of A, packed their belongings and made the trip to the desert.

The scholarship athlete lettered three years at the U of A as an offensive guard and linebacker.

He never had the urge to return to Chicago. "Not after the first winter," he says.

Son Garrett has picked up the pigskin. The 21-year-old red shirt junior is a quarterback on the current Wildcat football team. He's bigger than pop. The 6-2, 200-pound social science major is around three on the depth chart, says dad.

Knowing your kid will be playing on turf you maintain must give you extra incentive to do a good job...

The turf is aerified six times a year, fertilized six to eight times yearly, and top dressed twice, once in December after the season and in May after spring football practice.

And then there's the U of A baseball team. Always among the top colleges, World Series champs twice. Impressive. Their field must be too.

They start their schedule of 50 home games in February. They practice year round though not on the game field.

Raetzman allows the common bermuda in the outfield to go dormant. Only the Tifway bermuda



A well-maintained campus center where there's always activity.

infield and foul areas are overseeded.

Most of campus turf, mainly common bermuda, turns brown in the winter. Overseeding is rare at the U of A. It's a luxury when Raetzman is worried more about getting a crew to a campus hall to fix

a broken pipe.

Preventative maintenance

The snail's pace of the university bureaucracy can get to you. After 18 years, Raetzman deals with it.

He doesn't always get the equipment he needs when he needs

it. Sometimes he doesn't get it at all. "With the operational funds, especially with equipment replacement, we just don't get the replacement money as soon as we would like," he says.

It's made him a better manager and his crew more effective. "We still have mowers that are 8, 10, 12 years old. That's a compliment to the PM (preventative maintenance) guys. PM takes money out of our operation but that's what you have to do."

The department's 17-year-old backhoe was finally replaced this year.

"In the last several years the administration has been a lot more receptive. This year we probably have the most capital equipment money we've had since I've been here," says Raetzman.

It's a sign that Raetzman and his crew are landscaping their way out of anomomy.

He's excited about that. "I like the thought of being involved in the future of this university," he says. **WT&T**

Club Car's New Carryall II Will Out-Tough Any Utility Vehicle In The Field

Out-Perform

Everything about the new Carryall II - the body, truck bed, power and drive train, accessories - has been designed with exclusive Club Car features to enhance performance, durability, reliability and safety. The Carryall II will out-perform competitors in every category.

Out-Haul

With the largest pickup bed (50" x 50" x 11") and biggest gross payload (one-half ton) in the industry, plus a standard trailer hitch with a towing capacity of 1,000 lbs., the Carryall II becomes the most functional, practical and economical vehicle around.

Out-Last

Club Car exclusives like the Rust-Free Aluminum Pickup Bed & Frame*, heavy duty front bumper and side rub rails and Double Wall Pickup Bed Construction* of lightweight durable aluminum allows for a longer, more productive life span.

Out-Pull

Club Car's 4 Cycle/341 cc Engine*, the largest in the industry, gives the Carryall II the power to haul 1/2 ton loads without stress and vibrations.



Out-Maneuver

The Carryall II is designed to maneuver in tight aisles and small spaces with a clearance of 20'8", the tightest in the industry.

*Carryall II Exclusive Features.



P.O. Box 4658, Augusta, Georgia 30907-0658 U.S.A.