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around the other courses, too. This makes it easier for crew members at each course to bring debris to them.

Periodically, a crew member uses a front-end loader to turn and churn these piles. This is necessary to keep them aerobic. Only once did a pile go sour at the resort, recalls O'Dell. "It began stinking, so we spread it out and let it dry some. Then it was fine."

O'Dell says it takes about a season for the green wastes to turn into compost. Before it's used, it's run through a screener to remove any rocks and soda cans.

One of the prime ingredients in the resort's compost piles is grass clippings.

Before golf course equipment is washed, it's blown off with an air hose. Each course can generate over 300 lbs. of clippings a day. These are swept up and put in the piles.

Grass clippings also come from the lawns in front of the resort's hotel and guest areas. Sometimes, for appearance's sake, Frisbie's crew must bag them and add them to the piles.

But the most largest ingredient, by volume anyway, is leaves. In fact, beginning in September (maples and oaks turn early this far north), teams of workers begin blowing the leaves into windrows on the golf courses. Then leaf vacuums come along and suck them up.

These leaves, along with wood chips, are fed into the compost piles almost like ingredients measured into a cake mix. Sometimes sand and soil are also added to control moisture.

"If you have the right combination of wastes, then the compost piles seem to take care of themselves," says O'Dell. "Maybe we've been lucky, but it just hasn't been that difficult for us to compost."

Golf manager Wolfrom thinks more golf courses will be both trying to reduce the source of waste, and recycling what waste they do produce.

"I think our industry is primed for this. Being responsible for our waste is not a bad idea," he says.

## Keeping workers productive, the Sandburg/Lakeside way

**'Good clean fun' is the way to go, says this superintendent of a course where summer days run to sub-tropical weather.**

by Jerry Roche  
Editor-in-Chief

■ Sitting in the air-conditioned Houston office of Lakeside Country Club superintendent Mike Sandburg, at around 3 p.m., you can hear the muffled sounds of workers who've survived another day of 95 degree temperatures and 85 percent humidity. They're clowning around in the equipment area, winding the day down.

"Hear that?" Sandburg asks. "You wouldn't hear that at a lot of golf courses." He avoids the tired cliché of the crew that's one big happy family, but you know it's true here.

"I try to pass on the message to be happy with yourself or to find someplace where you can be happy," Sandburg asserts. And that is the key to successful personnel management at Lakeside, inarguably one of the spiffiest courses in east Texas.

"We're a good family—my wife Kelli, my son Matthew—and that includes the guys who work for me," says Sandburg.

He does many things well, as a good superintendent must. But the best thing he does is manage people. "The hardest part of this job is dealing with people," Sandburg notes, "and that's something I love to do."

He learned part of his management technique from his father, a hard-working Kansas farmer. ("This is the closest I could be to farming and still make money.") The rest he picked up during four years at ChemLawn, where he saw both the good



and the bad.

"The philosophy of Dick Duke (ChemLawn founder and CEO) was to put the customers and employees first and profits second. But by the time I left ChemLawn, he was gone and things had changed."

**Just do it!**—If there is a definition of

"working superintendent," Sandburg is that. "I can't sit in the office," he notes. "I just like to be one of the guys. And I don't ask my employees to do anything I can't or won't do.

"If you can't take employees out and show them how to do it yourself, you can't teach them. You have to break them in slowly. Only our most experienced guys mow fairways. New guys rake bunkers and work up from the bottom."

He claims that his employees would jump "a bridge, provided he asked them to, and that he jumped off with them. "They know that I do everything for a reason, and they don't question the reason." Continuing education is also a key to the happiness of the 26-person crew at Lakeside.

"I love to see people get better," Sandburg says. "My lead assistant, Chad Stearns, will make a good superintendent someday. And I want him to be a superintendent someplace, but I want him to be ready when he goes. Another employee is 19 years old, has one child and one on the way. He's finishing his GED, and I'm starting him on a training program to be a licensed pesticide applicator."

The training is reciprocal. Since superintendents are supposed to be jacks of all trades, Sandburg finds himself learning the odds and ends from his employees. "Every day's a learning process."

Most of the crew members at Lakeside are Hispanic, some Mexicans and Salvadorans with green cards, and some second-generation U.S. citizens, but Hispanic nonetheless. That makes language another potential

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Patterozzi. "I usually miss the play because I'm watching to see how the traction is."

Patterozzi battled the diseases with chemical controls. Because the practice fields are used daily by 80 highly skilled athletes, he's very careful about how and when to use them. The Browns' three-year-old practice facility has five fields and is located in the small college town of Berea about 15 miles southwest of downtown Cleveland.

This summer also generated more than its share of thunderstorms and rain. But Patterozzi's been reluctant to haul out the green tarpaulins, rolled up on the other side of the fifth practice field.

"In this disease-prone environment, you can imagine what we're doing by putting tarps on the turfgrass. We might as well put a gun to our heads," said Patterozzi. He

described tarp and disease management as his two biggest challenges so far in 1995.

Patterozzi is also responsible for the field at huge, gray Municipal Stadium that overlooks Lake Erie and is now neighbor to Cleveland's new Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

In the summer of 1994, he directed the regrading and rebuilding of that field, including the installation of underground irrigation (Hunter sprinkler heads, Buckner controllers) and the laying of 16,000 yards of big-roll, Kentucky bluegrass/perennial ryegrass sod. He uses it in 1½ inches thick in 4-foot-wide, 40-foot-long rolls.

This is sod that's been managed on the farm with the same regimen—fertilization, mowing and watering—that it will receive on the Browns' playing or practice fields, he said.

The sod was laid over a sand/soil mix enhanced with about 88,000 pounds of Axis, a diatomaceous earth. Patterozzi felt the product, disked and rotovated into the field, substantially helped the field's drainage during last fall's season.

He used a substantial amount of Axis on one of the practice fields too. On that particular field, Field Two which contains a slightly higher percentage of soil than the other practice fields, Patterozzi used a Floyd McKay aerifier equipped with hoppers to "drill" in the diatomaceous earth.

Patterozzi and the Browns hosted about 40 Cleveland-area PGMS members at the practice facility in August. That particular day, the expansion Carolina Panthers team was also practicing there.

—Ron Hall

**SANDBURG** from page 10G

problem spot. But not here.

"It doesn't matter what language you speak, people are people," Sandburg philosophizes. "You treat everyone with respect. You learn to work around it. Those of us who speak English adapt to those of us who don't, because we're the ones in the minority."

Head mechanic Martin Muñoz, who's been at Lakeside for 25 years, is a great help. He's one of only four people on the staff who is bilingual, though Sandburg is working on his Spanish.

**Defining 'tournament level'**—

Lakeside is widely recognized as having one of the top three or four golf courses in the Houston area. It's no fluke.

"We attempt to maintain the course at a tournament level for as long as possible," notes Sandburg. "By 'tournament level,' I mean more of a clean, manicured look—not necessarily fast, hard greens and excruciating rough."

He oversees 44,000 rounds per year played on Ron Pritchard's redesign by a membership numbering 850.

With the approach of a farmer ("we learned to use what we had on hand"), the intelligence of a scholar (master's degree from Kansas State University) and help from home ("my wife Kelli has been the driving force in my life"), Sandburg keeps Lakeside beautiful, its employees content.

"I love to see people—my members, my employees—happy," Sandburg concludes. "And I love to come to work because we're all happy here."

## Another Audubon story...

by Mike Sandburg  
Lakeside Country Club

■ At Lakeside Country Club, the maintenance department—in conjunction with the Greens Committee—feels that we have to set precedents. There are times when we could say, "Let's just not do it and run with the pack," but the membership doesn't want that.

We plan on becoming the first fully New York State Audubon-certified course in Texas. At this writing, we have more certifications—three—than any course in Texas.

A lot of requirements must be met. The first thing you have to do is establish an advisory committee. Though some courses have gone into the community to recruit advisors, I've tried to limit it to members of our club, because they're the ones with the pride in the course.

Lakeside is certified in (1) water quality, (2) water conservation and (3) environmental planning. Our water district has established guidelines that we now follow, and I have a computerized irrigation controller that can time heads to the second.

Some of the Audubon program's requirements are easy to meet, because they encompass things we were doing anyway: things like planting wildflowers in place of grass and cutting down on using

mower fuel.

Even though we're practically in the middle of Houston, we have a new gray fox living on the course because we've provided a food source and habitat. Yellow finches appeared this spring because it's more of a friendly location. We do regular wildlife audits and if we start to see new things, we send the Audubon Society updates.

More people need to hear this story, and more of us have got to get involved with the Audubon program. If that were the case, Paul Harvey would not have a leg to stand on. Some of us are way ahead of Paul, and were doing it before Harvey started his campaign against the golf course industry.

We've got to look to the future. This kind of thinking is becoming the rule, as the new breed of superintendent becomes more educated. You can actually see the changes taking place.

The Audubon program costs more money to start, but the long-term benefits and savings far outweigh the costs. For instance, by planting wildflowers, we've saved money on fertilizer and pesticide costs, we've saved money on mower fuel and we've saved money on the labor it takes to maintain grass rather than the wildflowers.

The point is that golf courses can—and should—give back to the environment what others take away.