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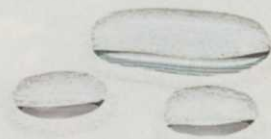
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LANDSCAPE PROFILE

CASE CLOSED

There's no question that award-winning Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland is one of the finest landscaped urban universities in the U.S.

by Heide Aungst, associate editor

Spring is John Michalko's favorite season.

Typically, spring is a time many find inspiration in a robin's song, a bouquet of fresh-cut daffodils or a radiant sunset.

But to Michalko, landscape superintendent at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, spring signals an end to the drudgery of snow removal and the beginning of "real" work.

"To the operators winter might not be boring, but to me it is,"

Michalko says. "I know what has to be done. I see what has to be done. Whenever there isn't snow on the ground, I go out and do it."

Unfortunately, the campus is usually hit with snow five months a year, thanks in part to its proximity to Lake Erie.

Michalko's crews always clear roads and sidewalks for early classes, even on days when the campus closes because city streets aren't clear, or a bitter windchill factor looms.

Snow is always considered when planning any type of landscape design. At CWRU, the design of certain areas includes a place to put plowed snow without damaging plant materials. Sidewalks are a certain width to facilitate plowing.

Since concrete and asphalt don't hold up well under freezing conditions, Michalko started using uni-stone interlocking pavers in 1983.

He also discovered the pavers worked well on tree lawns where excessive salt damage from salting icy roads prohibited solid turf growth.

A different season, a different job

But when spring comes, Michalko buries the winter blues and concentrates on readying athletic fields and beautifying the campus for graduation ceremonies in late May.

Case held commencement outdoors for the first time in 1985. It was such a success that the administration plans to continue the practice.



Springtime at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland means color in every corner of campus.



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Fusarium leaf spot.



Necrotic ring spot.



Summer patch.





An early spring scene on the Case campus.

Michalko won the PGMS Grand Award for athletic fields in 1980 and plans to enter the competition this year. "Our fields are pushed to the maximum," Michalko says. Sometimes 60 intramural games are played on a field in one week.

Case has one intramural field for soccer and football which is marked with colored paints running in different directions. It also has six softball fields. Michalko uses a bluegrass/ryegrass mix on the fields.

The urban campus is at the hub of the University Circle area on Cleveland's cultural east side. Its properties are blended with those of the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Natural History Museum, the Cleveland Clinic, and the Garden Center of Greater Cleveland.

Because of the busy thoroughfares surrounding the campus, Michalko works hard at keeping even minor details, such as flowers around every university sign, in order.

A large volume of pedestrian traffic also makes the daily trek across campus. "Students will always take the shortest distance between two points," Michalko sighs. To prevent extensive turf damage, Michalko has built walkways and frequently uses shrubbery as a natural barrier.

Shrubbery must be maintained below three feet for security purposes.

Trees are trimmed regularly to promote their growth, enhance lighting, and increase visibility, he says.

Michalko says many schools are now planning landscape design in conjunction with security personnel. CWRU has done this during Michalko's eight years.

There are special considerations in working for a private university. For example, during finals week, works crews cannot run any power equipment before 9 a.m. "in case some students who were up all night studying want to sleep in."

Vandalism: a big problem

Perhaps the biggest problem

— Circle No. 114 on Reader Inquiry Card

Michalko must deal with is vandalism, ranging from broken sprinkler systems to spray graffiti.

It's often difficult to know if the vandalism was done as a fraternity prank or on a city kid's dare. "Kids will be kids," Michalko says.

One time the grounds crew set up stakes to tell where to snowplow. But during the night, someone moved the stakes. Needless to say, the crew never tried that again.

An advantage to working for a university, however, are the grants that come in earmarked for particular landscape use.

This spring Michalko and his crew will use funds from "friends of the university" to trim trees and plant new ones.

The money for special projects is used in addition to the regular operating budget, which Michalko wouldn't reveal.

"I tell the front office what I need and they handle the budgeting," Michalko says. "They'll tell me if I go over. One time we had a cutback and I was told to cut budgets, not people. New equipment and supplies went first."

Managing people: a tough job

Michalko uses a full-time, year-

round crew of 15. His philosophy is to pay them well and give them a good benefit package to keep them happy with their job.

The university's benefit package includes free tuition for the employee and his family.

Still, dealing with 15 individuals is the part of the job Michalko finds most difficult.

"They all have their own personalities," Michalko says. "But they take pride in the campus because they see it every day. I'd stack 95 percent of them up against anybody."

Michalko would rather be out working with Mother Nature than dealing with human nature. His plan for the campus includes a color code, which means there is color on the campus at all times.

according to what color they turn in the fall to further enhance the

autumn beauty of the campus.

A sugar maple will turn yellow, orange, and scarlet, while a tulip tree will turn yellow, a crown right pin oak will turn red and a sweet gum will turn orange and scarlet, he says.

Michalko works closely with landscape architects William Behnke Associates Inc. for all design changes.

Since 1977, many new vest-pocket parks, walkways and courtyards have been installed.

This year his major project is to renovate the landscaping around the dorms and fraternities, including adding an irrigation system. "All the major work is done," says Michalko. "There's just some minor tinkering left."

But for Michalko, that tinkering will probably never be finished. "My biggest challenge is trying to satisfy myself," he says. "I try to be a perfectionist. I want everything done just right."

Whether it's award-winning athletic fields, bright autumn colors or fresh spring flowers, Case Western Reserve University will always be in tip-top shape while Michalko is at the helm...even though snowplowing is a little boring. **WT&T**

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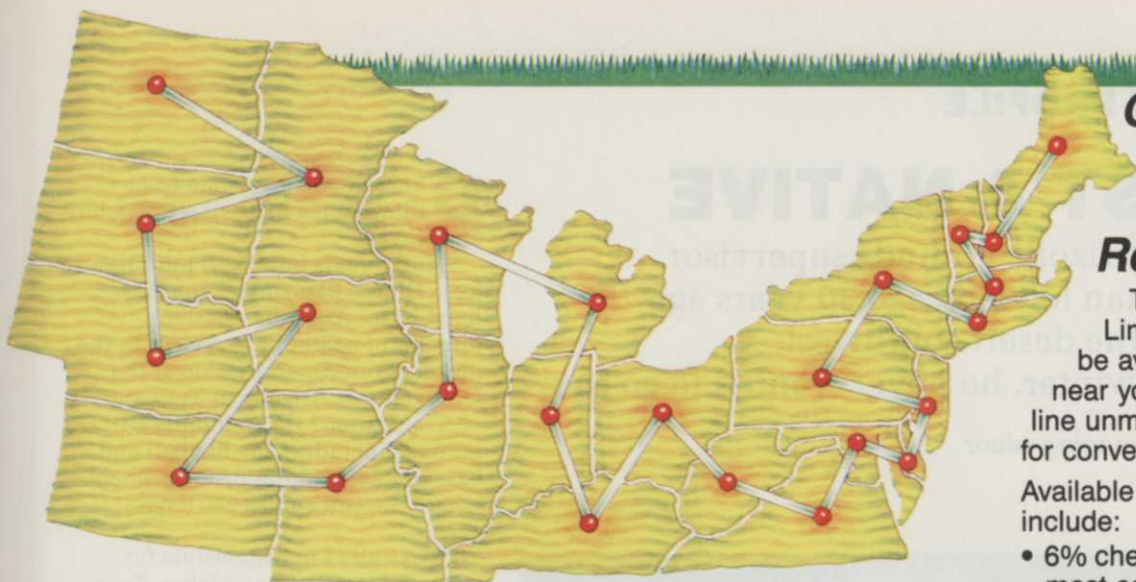
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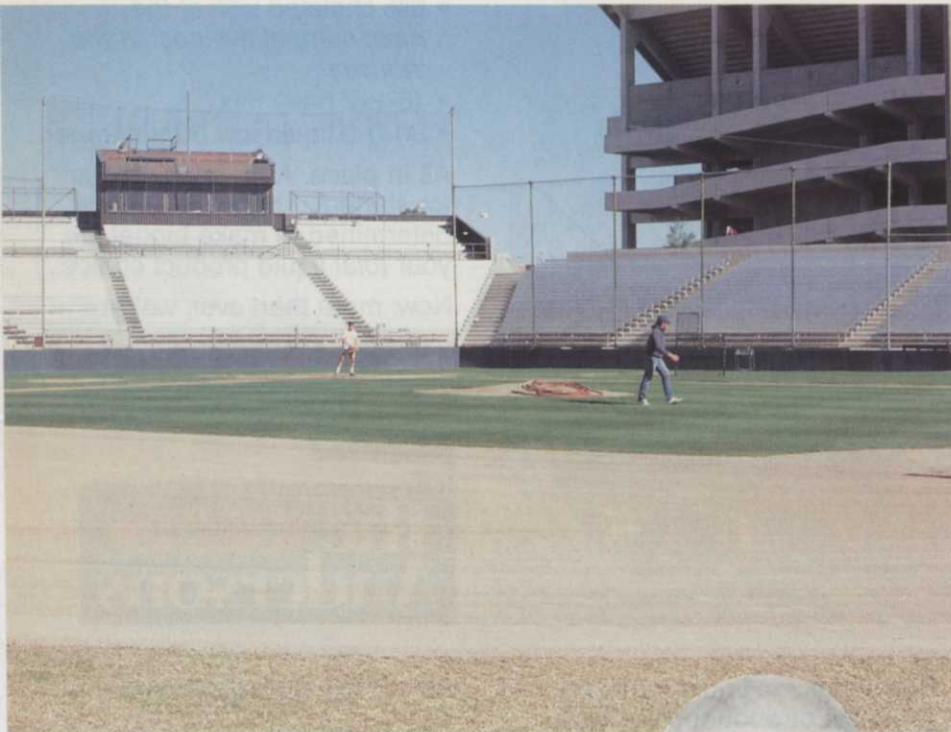
LANDSCAPE PROFILE

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.



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"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