

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

LET PHOTOGRAPHY DOCUMENT YOUR SKILL



As spring golf, baseball, and soccer get underway, do yourself a favor. Get your hands on an easy-to-use camera and stock up on film. Starting now, and for the rest of the year, keep it loaded and by your side at all times. Take it with you wherever you go, just like you carry your radio and note pad.

The photographs you take will make you a better manager of both turf and personnel. They will help you illustrate clearly to your staff and supervisors what needs to be done . . . and they will visually document your progress. The expression, one picture is worth a thousand words, is based in fact.

When you see damage by insects, diseases, cart traffic, drainage and irrigation problems, vandalism and extra events, get the camera out and record it on film. Jot down short notes for each photo. When you get the prints or slides back from the developer, show them to your key advisors to get their recommendations. Fellow superintendents, extension turf specialists, distributor tech reps, and members of your staff may have valuable solutions. Now you have visual proof of these problems, as well as a choice of solutions.

Pick the solution that best fits your facility and make the necessary changes. But as you do, take more photos to track the results. You will build a valuable reference for the future, one you can use time and time again to compare products and methods.

These photographs, combined with your written records, can serve as an exceptional training tool for your staff. When weather forces the crew inside, take advantage of this time to explain the chief problems at your facility and the best way to correct them. Because you can show actual, on-site examples, the lessons you give apply directly to their work.

The fact that you have gone the extra mile to find the best solutions to problems at your facility, and used this information to train your staff, protects you and your employer from one of the largest concerns of the industry today—liability.

Golf course superintendents and sports turf managers who apply pesticides know the importance of a written maintenance schedule and a work log. This documentation is extremely important when an inspector arrives at your facility. Why not add a photographic record to prove further that you select, mix and apply chemicals in a safe and responsible manner? Display these photos in work areas to constantly remind your staff of the importance of proper handling of pesticides.

Liability is also a major concern today of superintendents of parks and schools. If a lawyer for an injured player can establish negligence in regard to maintenance, the financial damage can be substantial. Furthermore, liability insurance rates have been climbing steadily. Photographs, combined with written maintenance records, go a long way in showing insurance companies that negligence is not a factor at your facility. And they may reduce premiums.

As you can see, photographs not only help you document your work, they help you find important solutions, train your staff, protect your facility from fines and damages, and give you the evidence you may need to justify purchases of important equipment, products or services.

If that isn't enough to make you pick up a camera, there is one more reason to become a photographer: recognition. Take, for example, the Baseball Diamond of the Year Award winners which we start to feature in this issue. The judges did not visit each facility to determine whether its diamond was better than all the others in its category. They had to rely strictly on photography and a written entry. All three winners documented their progress with words and photographs.

Today's cameras are easy to use, fit in your pocket, and are very affordable. They are a tool you should put to use immediately.

Bruce F. Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

APRIL

1-6

American Society of Golf Course Architects Annual Meeting, Pinehurst, Pinehurst, NC. Contact: Paul Fullmer, executive secretary, 221 N. La Salle St., Suite 3900, Chicago, IL 60601, (312) 372-7090.

1-3

National School Boards Association Annual Exposition, Anaheim, CA. Contact: NSBA, 1680 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314, (703) 838-NSBA.

7-11

National Intramural, Recreational Sports Association National Conference. Sheraton Denver Tech Center, Denver, CO. Contact: NIRSA, Gill Coliseum, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331, (503) 754-2088.

30-1

Oregon Golf Course Superintendents Association 27th Annual Meeting, Agate Beach Golf Course, Newport, OR. Contact: Dick Malpass, OGCSA, 10804 NW 11th Ave., Vancouver, WA 98685, (206) 573-6969.

MAY

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North Carolina State University Turf and Landscape Field Day, NCSU Turf Field Center, Raleigh, NC. Contact: Dr. Art Bruneau, Dept. of Crop Science, NCSU, Raleigh, NC 27695, (919) 737-2326.

JUNE

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Midwest Sports Turf Institute, Harper College, Palatine, IL. Contact: Sports Turf Managers Association, 400 N. Mountain Ave., Suite 301, Upland, CA 91786. (714) 981-9199.