



"Other duties as assigned"

By Kevin Bevenour

At the beginning of each month, as I anxiously await the arrival of my *SportsTurf* magazine, I sit down and write a 1-page report for my boss that generalizes the things the grounds department has accomplished over the past 4 weeks. It's normal that managing the sports turf on campus does not consume all of my time. There are other responsibilities that must be taken care of regularly and still others that pop up unexpectedly.

I'm sure most readers can relate on some

level to this situation. This article is dedicated to those duties, the "other things" that we do, whether they are part of your job responsibilities or just things that need to be taken care of by being in the wrong place at the right time.

"Sports Turf Manager" may only be part of your position description. We all know what N, P, and K are. We all know about mowing, seeding, and aerating. We all know when to irrigate and how to handle brown patch, weeds, and grubs. But if you're someone like me, being in charge of a larger facility, you might have to know about trees, shrubbery, flowers, trash, and snow removal. And that's not mentioning

students and events and construction and staff.

Regardless of the facility you maintain, we all have "off field" responsibilities. I'd like to tell you how I maintain some level of sanity trying to get everything done in a timely fashion. I'm not going to preach any time management philosophies; my wife has dissected my problems in that area. And I've only had limited success with mass quantities of adult beverages.

People

Let's face it, we can't do it all by ourselves. We need help. But some help is better than other help. Yes, people get sick. Some even

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take vacations! Others need special attention. There are roughly 260 normal working days in a year. Last year, only 5 of those days passed in which someone did not submit a leave slip for time off work. Supervising a crew and scheduling work takes time and is the least gratifying of all the things I do.

Wait! I almost forgot, doing evaluations has to be at the top of that list. And I won't even go into the whole payroll process. I, by far, have not mastered this part of my job. I sometimes feel like I'm running an adult daycare center. I guess I expect too much from others. Someday hopefully I'll be taken by complete surprise and it will all just fall together.

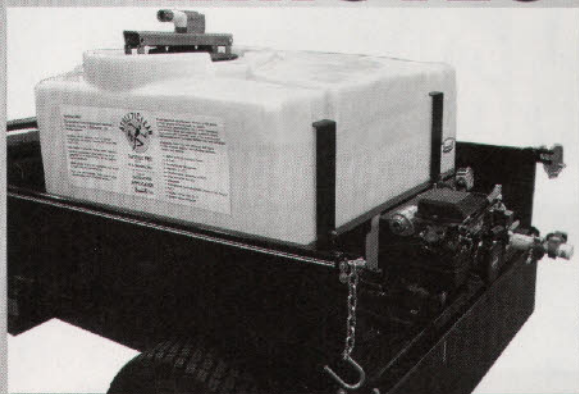
Salespeople and vendors fall under this category. Am I the only one who doesn't like unannounced sales calls? If I need something, I'll call you; otherwise please set up an appointment.

I've developed some good relationships with many vendors. They can be a wealth of knowledge and make your job easier. Remember though that some of them are only as good as the product or service you buy from them. This inevitably leads to paying bills and dealing with the purchasing department. I have the responsibility of reconciling my purchasing card statement each month. Instead of their writing many checks, they only write one. Now I have to somehow manage to keep all the receipts in one place until the statement arrives. I have enough trouble remembering where I put my lunch.

I was informed long ago that when you provide a service, the



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requestor of that service is called a "customer." They can range from the athletes and coaches who use the fields to the chairperson of the committee whose group is having an event. All of them need your support and undivided attention. All of them want to be right. They don't want to hear "no" and they expect results. Their event is the most important, and they'll be the first to tell you that if there are any doubts. To them, the 9 AM soccer game before a 1 PM football game doesn't raise any flags. Fireworks are beautiful in the night sky, and then everyone goes home. What clean up? Developing procedures and practices has helped alleviate some last minute problems. The only advice I have is, be nice and smile.

The other supervisors and managers in your department or facility can be a life-saving support system. Use them whenever possible. Let them take care of any off-the-field issues they are capable of handling. Proper coordination will leave you with more time for proj-

ect managers or the Director or the Board or the Vice President or the President or the owner, all of whom have their set of expectations and demands.

Animals

How many have seen a video of a groundskeeper running around trying to catch a wayward cat or squirrel on a playing field? I wish it were that simple. I can't count the number of baby ducks I have rescued from storm drains, or helped to find their way back to Momma Duck. Though they are by far the cutest of all little ones. I've gotten calls about squirrels, groundhogs, bats, birds, geese, snakes, turtles, and skunks. I even was asked to try and get rid of a couple of foxes. How did wild animal control get mixed in with managing sports turf? What qualifies me as the expert? Oh, that's right; we're the keepers of the grounds, so naturally we know how to take care of it. And for those critters that don't quite make it—road kill potpie!

Mother Nature

If there isn't enough to keep you busy, you can add another line to the position description: meteorologist. When you want or need it to rain, it doesn't. When you have enough, it doesn't stop. But here's the kicker: somewhere along the line, you've become responsible for something that's completely out of your control. Everyone comes to you. When's it going to rain? How much snow are we going to get? What's the weather going to be next week? When are the thunderstorms going to hit? Thank God for radar loops!

The thing is, we're pretty good at guessing the weather, at least just as well as weathermen. I just go outside and look up. Try it, it works! Maybe if this whole groundskeeping thing doesn't work out, I can get a gig as one of those storm chasers on The Weather Channel. ■

Kevin Bevenour is campus grounds supervisor for Millersville University in Pennsylvania.

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