The Lowell family has had its fair share of golf awards over the years, but the latest — and most likely the last — came as quite a surprise.

In January, the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents (CAGCS) named Heather Lowell Garvin its 2002 Superintendent of the Year, making her the first woman to hold that distinction in the 22 years of the award.

Garvin is the superintendent at the nine-hole Canton (Conn.) Public GC that was built by her great-grandfather and run by the family since it opened in 1932. Her husband, Dana, is the assistant superintendent and mechanic. The previous superintendent was her father Walter Lowell, a CAGCS Life Member who is also a PGA pro. In 1978, he was selected National PGA Golf Professional of the Year.

In 2000, the Metropolitan Golf Writers Association named the Lowells as the national golf family of the year.

For Garvin, the award was a complete surprise. The family was informed of the honor a few days before the presentation. Her father, mother Ruth, who works in the pro shop, and husband managed to sneak into the awards ceremony without Garvin finding out. When her name was announced, Garvin said she was stunned, but managed to leave the microphone before getting too choked up.

“I didn’t say too much,” she said. “You just say your thank yous. I got off before I cried. It’s nice to be honored by your peers.”

Voting was open to the 44 Class A superintendents as well as the life members of the Connecticut association. There are three other women Class A superintendents in the Connecticut Association.

John Callahan, president/owner of The Cardinals, a golf course supply company, is the commercial representative to the CAGCS and was in charge of the voting. He surmised many members cast their ballot for Garvin, 42, as a way of honoring her for her years of service to the association in what might be her final season as a superintendent.

Sadly, Canton may have hosted its last round. Since the mid-1990s, the extended Lowell family has been negotiating to sell some of the most viable undeveloped property in the wealthy Hartford suburb. The course has 1,400 feet that borders the busy four-lane Route 44. The final paperwork is expected to be completed this spring. Once sold, the layout is slated to be

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Off The Fringe

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turned into an upscale shopping mall.
Walter and his two brothers own the
golf course, but there is little interest by
the extended family, including
Heather's sister and cousins, to con-
tinue operating the business, he said.
Garvin graduated from the Univer-
sity of Denver with a degree in psychol-
yogy. Following her senior year in col-
lege, she spent her stint on the grounds
crew. Although she had worked on the
golf course nearly her whole life, it had
been inside the pro shop.
"It was really enjoyable. I didn't real-
ize there was that much science," she
said of her stint outside.
Following college Garvin fulfilled a
dream and moved to Bermuda. The
only work she could find was in an of-
office and after a month she realized the
life was not for her and returned to golf
course grounds crew. The following off-
season, she attended her first turf classes
as part of the University of Massachu-
setts winter school. She continued her
education through the state, regional
and national associations.
Since joining the CAGCS, Garvin
has been active within the organization.
In 1993, she was appointed to the
CAGCS Board of Directors. She
continues to be re-elected.
Garvin also excels in golf, sporting a
single-digit handicap. She has also do-
nated her time in teaching the game.
With all her ties to golf; another job
in the business seems the logical choice.
But Garvin is unsure what her next step
will be after cleaning out the pro shop
and helping her parents move out of the
house just off the first tee that contains a
golf course's lifetime of memorabilia.
"We'll see what happens," she said.
"I'm not going to rush into anything."

Pioppi is a free-lance writer from
Middletown, Conn.

D'Avino Named
Group Publisher

Tony D'Avino is the new group pub-
lisher of Golfdom magazine and three
other magazines at Advanstar Commu-
nications, including Landscape Man-
agement, Pest Control and Landscape
Design/Build. D'Avino comes to Ad-
vanstar from Penton Media, where he
served as a group publisher. He re-
places John Payne, who was group pub-
lisher from 1995 until early 2003.
"We're extremely fortunate to have
Tony joining our team," said Alex De-
Barr, Advanstar executive vice presi-
dent. "We'd also like to wish John
Payne the best in his next endeavor."
D'Avino said he's excited to take
on the new role. "This is a great
chance to work with the most-re-
spected and fastest-growing group of
magazines in our industry."

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