

*Since the course was carved out of a natural sandy ridge with excellent drainage characteristics, the native soil was left as sand for the 187 bunkers... (architect Steve) Smyers specified that the roughs be planted in bahiagrass to provide a more rough-hewn textural contrast to the manicured bermudagrass fairways.*

design philosophy of requiring golfers to think their way around the course. Shot placement and taking advantage of the contours are key to having a successful round at Southern Dunes.

One might guess that with a word like "dunes" in the name, bunkers would be a major feature of the golf course and so they are. There are 187 to be exact and many of those are huge flowing sandy "waste" areas in addition to an array of traditional bunkers guarding fairway turns and protecting greens. Since the course was carved out of a natural sandy ridge with excellent drainage characteristics, the native soil was left as the bunker sand.

In keeping with the links concept, Smyers specified that the roughs be planted in bahiagrass to provide a more rough-hewn textural contrast to the manicured bermudagrass fairways. Smyers also advocated the judicious use of native grasses to provide that heather-and-gorse effect of the typical links layout. The result is a golf course of raw beauty and interesting shotmaking challenges for

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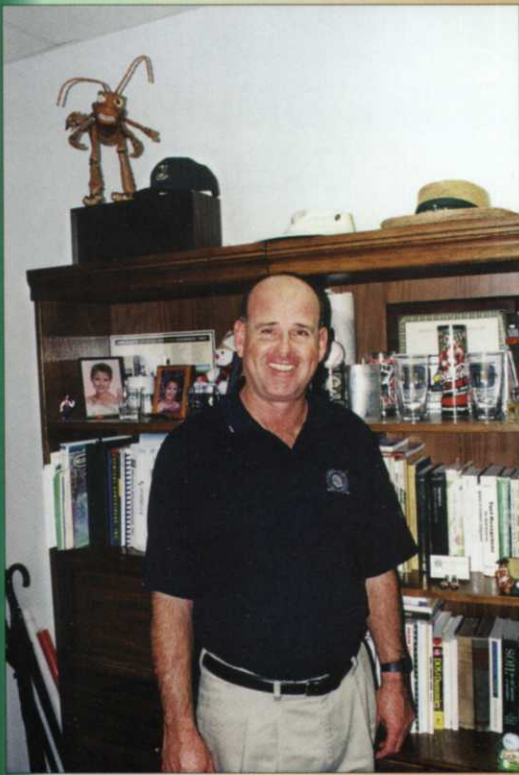


## Fun Facts

Here are some things you might not know about our cover story superintendent.

1. **Car:** 1994 Chevy Corsica
2. **Last good movie I saw:** Finding Forrester
3. **I stay home to watch:** Reruns of Seinfeld and Mash
4. **Book I've been reading:** Tuesdays With Morrie
5. **Favorite meal:** Shrimp Creole
6. **Favorite performers:** B. B. King and Ray Charles
7. **Prized possession:** My house.
8. **Personal heroes:** Robert T. Jones, Jr.
9. **Nobody knows that I:** Love thrill rides
10. **I'm better than anyone else when it comes to:** Being diplomatic
11. **If I could do it over:** I'm still a work in progress with no regrets
12. **My fantasy is:** Lift off in the space shuttle
13. **The one thing I can't stand:** Cell phones! A book on cell phone etiquette should be mandatory reading with every purchase.
14. **If I could change one thing about myself:** I'd have more patience
15. **The words that best describe me:** Easy going

Don't ask Bayne Caillavet about the best bass fishing lakes. Ask him where you can find the Cumba, Kracken and Mantou roller coasters.



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golfers of varying abilities.

Unique designs and concepts offer unique challenges to the superintendent, who must serve his ownership and golf members and still try to be faithful to the architect's vision of the golf course. It can be a tough balancing act sometimes, and the man who has been on the tightrope is Bayne Caillavet the only superintendent Southern Dunes has ever had.

Caillavet was working just down the road at the Grenelefe Resort when he applied for the superintendent's position at Southern Dunes. Project Manager Ralph Forrest hired him to work with the irrigation contractor when only six holes had been roughed in.

Caillavet calls the timing a godsend. "I walked every ditch. Saw every stick of pipe go in the ground. Logged all the hydraulic tubing lines and connections. It has certainly paid dividends when inevitable problems crop up over time. Not every superintendent gets that kind



*The current drought effect on the lake level on hole #12 is visible in the background as superintendent Bayne Caillavet indicates the contrasting high water mark during 1997's El Niño rains which flooded most of the fairway. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

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Number 9 "Press 'Em Up." The key to success on this 542-yard hole is to stay out of the Texas sage, the cordgrass and the dunes, so you can putt the two-tiered green in regulation. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

of opportunity and many never inherit an as-built blueprint either."

Another thing Caillavet did — and continues to do — is to write everything down in a permanent journal or

notebook when he rides the golf course. He says, "Paperwork is the worst part of my job. I like to be out on the golf course. It's an important part of my personal job satisfaction, but it is also

important to document what I see not only to evaluate current conditions but to make lists of things that need to be done. If you try to make a mental note, an hour later you are distracted by an

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*Number 2 "Texas Dolly." She may not be long at 374 yards, but she's no lady if you try to let the "big dawg eat" off the tee. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

emergency and you forget half of the things you've seen. I have found it quite

enjoyable to go back and reread some of those notes to see how things have

changed and how much we have accomplished. It's a great historical

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*The rolling terrain makes for an interesting golf course, but when we get heavy downpours there are a few places the water races downhill and breaches the bunker edges and washes out the bunkers. We are adding some subtle fairway contours and pocket drains to divert or capture the water.*

archive and a good management tool.”

Caillavet likes the Scottish look of the golf course and tries to work with the architect as much as possible to preserve the original design. Smyers likes to stay involved in all his projects as much to preserve his original visions and to see how they mature over time. Caillavet says, “The native soil in the bunkers and the bahiagrass around them are our biggest concerns. If we don’t cultivate the bunker faces they can crust over and algae will form and weeds invade. The down side is that by cultivating the native soil it softens up and can create embedded lies from line-drive shots.”

There are some modifications Caillavet is working on as the course evolves. He said, “The rolling terrain makes for an interesting golf course, but when we get heavy downpours there are a few places the water races downhill and breaches the bunker edges and washes out the bunkers. We

are adding some subtle fairway contours and pocket drains to divert or capture the water before it can cause erosion.”

“We are also expanding some of our native cordgrass and gulf muhly plantings to dress up the sandy waste bunkers around the tee complexes. These areas are designed to act as retention areas for the runoff from the development and we want to improve the aesthetics a little more.”

The growth of the development around the course has also had an impact on the original layout as more trees have been planted to create a more neighborhood look. Caillavet agrees that care must be taken in placement so that as the trees mature they won’t intrude on the original links design.

Caillavet makes no bones about the fact that keeping Southern Dunes in award-winning condition is a team effort and he gives his staff a lion’s share of the credit. With only 13 staff mem-

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bers to help run the operation and groom the 175 acres, Caillavet depends on communication and teamwork to stay on top of the program.

“Our daily schedule board is our communication center,” he says. “We have a pre-shift meeting at the board for daily assignments and we meet there again at the end of the day to document what got done and what needs to be finished up. During the day it is understood that everyone will check the board when they come back to the shop to see if there are any new messages changing the job assignments.”

“The crew members are encouraged to add their own messages, noting completion of jobs and alerting me to any problems they have seen during their rounds on the course. We all get busy and I may be spraying or fertilizing or in a meeting, so I depend on their input as well as my own observations to help run the course efficiently.”

Caillavet calls himself a hopeless romantic when it comes to superintending. In fact he prefers the title “head greenskeeper.” He feels that it captures the real spirit and meaning of the position. He says, “I think sometimes we get too caught up in titles. Maybe it’s an ego thing.

“It is up to each individual to earn the respect of the people he works for and works with. If you conduct yourself professionally in all aspects of your work and personal life, your job title is of little consequence. When I hear the word “superintendent.” I visualize someone with a tool belt in an apartment building. It’s tough to find one label that adequately describes the wide variety of job responsibilities that we have.”

“Sometimes they call me the chameleon around here because I might change clothes during the day. But if I have to do some dirty work on the course, I make sure I can change if I have to go to the clubhouse for a meeting.”

Given his preference for the title



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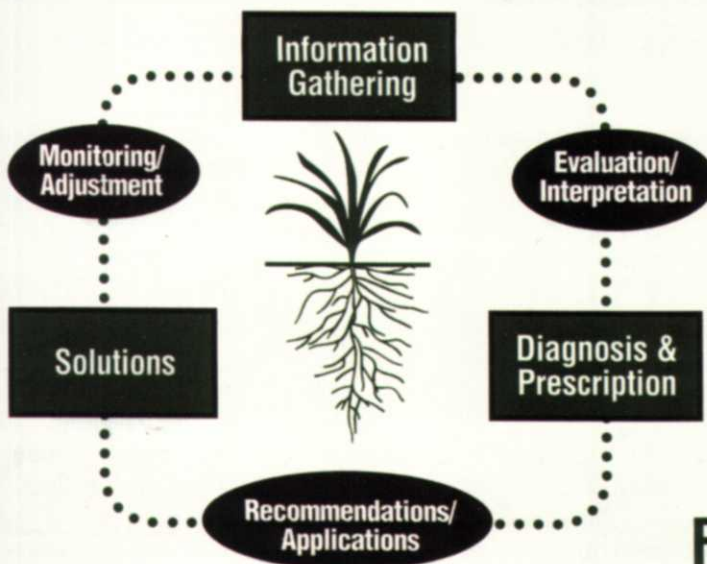




Number 14 "Bunkers by the Dozen." It's only 167 yards from the back tee, so all the sand should just be a mirage. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

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*“Heaven’s Gate” is 413 yards uphill. The bunker in the foreground is near the tee complex and serves as one of the runoff retention areas for the development. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

***“Maybe PDI will provide the tools to communicate (our) value, but it still boils down to the individual person growing good, healthy turf and earning respect for who he is and what he does at his own club.”***

greenskeeper, I asked Caillavet what he thought about GCSAA’s Professional Development Initiative and what it would mean for the profession. He responded, “I don’t know if PDI can change the public’s or even the golf world’s perception of what a superintendent is or does. We definitely still have a long way to go and I don’t mean to sound pessimistic.

“During the PGA Merchandise Show I attended a big promotional event one evening and as the video played on the big screen the dialogue written to golf pros went something like this... “What makes you get up in the morning? What is it about teeing up that first ball in the morning on that course that you made

green?” Here is a major golf equipment manufacturer implying the golf pro made the golf course green. That’s why I say we still have a lot of old-time thinking to overcome.”

“Maybe PDI will provide members with the opportunities and tools to learn how to better communicate their value and contribution to the game, but it still boils down to the individual person growing good, healthy turf and earning respect for who he is and what he does at his own club.”

With a wall full of top golf course awards in the clubhouse I’d say that Southern Dunes and Bayne Caillavet are both getting a full measure of respect for those very same reasons. 