

Superintendents' spousal support: The male and female of it

By TERRY BUCHEN

Early mornings, early evenings and weekends lost to work. Mental and physical stress, especially during the golf season. The pressures of keeping club members happy and crew members productive. All are elements that affect the spouses of superintendents — and their marriages — as well as the supers personally.

Having an agronomist for a wife helps

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. — Barbara B. Beall is an environmental scientist with The LA Group, headquartered here. She can relate to agronomy — she co-teaches Golf Course Superintendents Association of America wetlands seminars all over the country. She can also

relate to spouses of superintendents — husband Chris Frielinghaus holds that job at Glens Falls (N.Y.) CC.

"We are both outdoor people who enjoy nature, so we are very compatible in our personal and professional life," said Beall when asked about being married to a superintendent. "My son and I like to go with Chris to check out the course after dinner, and he makes us feel involved as much as practical."

Winters and weekends are spent making up for the time lost during the long summer months, she said.

"A few disadvantages include that when he comes home, he is still mentally at the golf course — because he never really comes home. I would like him to be both physically and mentally home after work, but it is tough during the summer. We also do not get things done around the house like they should be done because of his busy schedule, which brings on more stress at home after hours. Chris usually loses 10 to 20 pounds during the season."

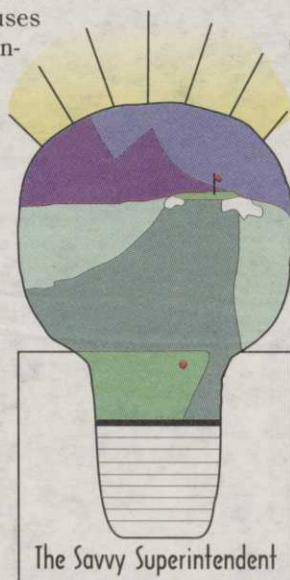
This summer they intend to take one week off in August. Chris has "a really good assistant," Barbara said.

Barbara said she likes to show support for her husband, adding she sometimes takes pizza and sodas for the staff when it is working late and then tops it off with some homemade brownies.

"Chris is getting a home computer, so he can adjust the watering cycles from home," she said. "This will help him get better organized, so we can talk and be together without competition from the course that seems, at times, to be his first love."

Taking a look at what "the other half" thinks, we spoke to two opposite halves:

- Barbara B. Beall, who is married to Glens Falls (N.Y.) Country Club superintendent Chris Frielinghaus, to get the female point of view; and
- David Vista, whose wife, Nancy Harris Vista, is superintendent at the Old Tabby Links at Spring Island in Ridgeland, S.C., to get the male point of view.



Husband eyes weekends for time together

RIDGELAND, S.C. — You might say May 1, 1992, was a full day for Nancy Harris Vista. She graduated from Lake City Community College at 11 a.m., switched from graduation gown to her wedding gown and was married to her best friend, David, two hours later. Then off they went to the Buford area of South Carolina to Nancy's new job as assistant at Old Tabby Links.

Proving her zest for her job, seven months later she had earned the head superintendent position.

Her husband, a contractor specializing in custom carpentry and who is finishing a pavilion near Old Tabby, said: "We both get up at the same time each morning, about 4:30. We both put in long hours in our jobs. And we both are fortunate in that we both love our jobs and can 'see' what we have accomplished at any given moment."

"Nancy has to really love her job, to be a golf course superintendent, as she has a lot of responsibility and is really dedicated to it."

Unlike Barbara Beall's husband Chris, Nancy has "a great ability to leave her work at work most of the time," David said, "and that really helps in our relationship. Since we both work long hours, there are times that I will still be working when she is finished for the day."

The only time David sees Nancy overly concerned about her job, he said, is "when some of the staff calls in sick, as she really has a great crew, they do one heck of a job and they have the highest respect for

Nancy and what she is accomplishing in great playing conditions for the members and their guests."

David and Nancy enjoy going to the golf course together, when no golfers are around, to enjoy the course and its nature preserves and good fishing lakes. "It is very tranquil and peaceful," David said.

"Nancy's early childhood said a lot about her character and her future career as she used to love to go down to the garden store with her parents and run her hands through the bins full of grass seed. Her brothers are also in the golf business, making it a true family affair," David said. "My only real complaint is that we cannot spend quality time together every weekend. She and her assistant alternate weekends, so we try and get away biweekly. When it is her turn to work weekends, I work on my projects as well."

"We have taken one week of vacation since we got married and moved to Buford... But we hope to be able to take a little more time off when it is appropriate."

Saying he is proud of Nancy being successful as a woman superintendent, and also for being at the top of her college class, David added: "She has progressed leaps and bounds at Old Tabby Links."

Nancy is originally from the Orange Park area of Jacksonville, Fla., and David was born in Cleveland and grew up in Medina, Ohio. They met in Boulder, Colo., and moved to Lake City, Fla., to pursue Nancy's agronomy schooling.

A testament to Nancy's abilities? Old Tabby Links came in 5th in *Golf Digest's* Best New Private Courses survey in January.

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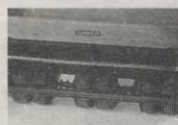
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