

## Off The Fringe

# A Complete (and Pleasant) Surprise

GARVIN IS CAGCS'S SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR AND THE FIRST WOMAN TO RECEIVE THE HONOR

By Anthony Pioppi

**T**he 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



Heather Lowell Garvin (front) with her family: (from left) father Walter Lowell, mother Ruth and husband Dana Garvin.

and 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 presenta-

tion. 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

*Continued on page 20*

## Quotable

**"Something that really gets twisted around is the idea that our headquarters needs to be close to the PGA for us to be respected. If we were in the same building as PGA, we'd still be in the basement."**

— A California superintendent commenting on GCSAA's consideration to move to a "golf-centric" location.



**"You can't say to your green chairman, 'You may be a successful businessman, but you don't know diddly-squat about growing grass,' but you want to."**

— Tim Moraghan, USGA tournament agronomist, talking about the politics involved in golf course maintenance.

**"I was having a discussion with Houston Couch about fairy ring the other day. Well, let's be honest: It was pretty much a one-way conversation."**

Leon Lucas, agronomist of the Carolinas Golf Association, on talking with the notoriously opinionated professor from Virginia Tech.

## Off The Fringe

*Continued from page 19*

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 continue operating the business, he said.

Garvin graduated from the University of Denver with a degree in psychology. Following her senior year in college, 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 realize 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 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 Massachusetts 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 donated 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."

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

## D'Avino Named Group Publisher

Tony D'Avino is the new group publisher of *Golfdom* magazine and three other magazines at Advanstar Communications, including *Landscape Management*, *Pest Control* and *Landscape Design/Build*. D'Avino comes to Ad-



vanstar from Penton Media, where he served as a group publisher. He replaces John Payne, who was group publisher from 1995 until early 2003.

"We're extremely fortunate to have Tony joining our team," said Alex DeBarr, Advanstar executive vice president. "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-respected and fastest-growing group of magazines in our industry."

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