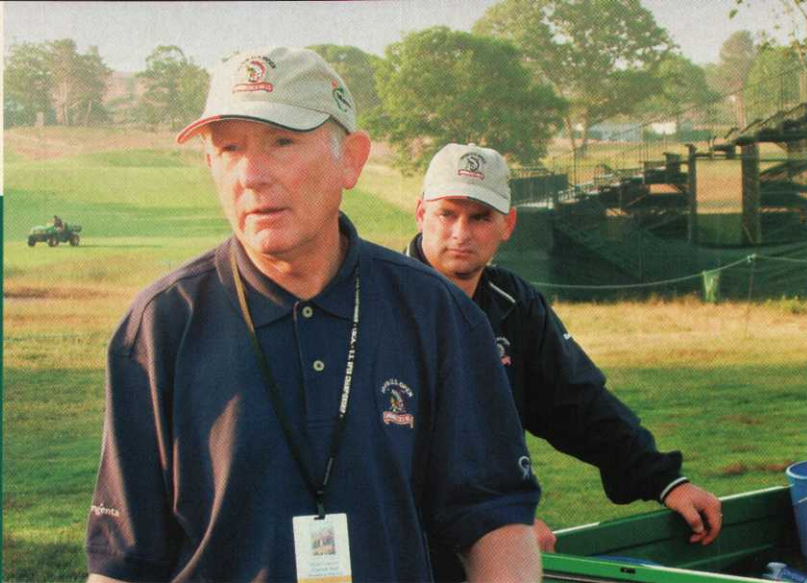


Foreign

They came from distant lands to volunteer
on Shinnecock's golf course maintenance crew for the U.S. Open.
They left with intimate memories



Aid



STORY AND PHOTOS BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR

Standing in the middle of the 18th fairway at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, Dave “D.J.” Crawford cranes his neck, squints his eyes and peers skyward at the low-flying helicopters whirring across the hazy morning sky. The sun hasn’t been up long in Southampton, N.Y., but Shinnecock is already buzzing with excitement. That’s because golf’s big-top extravaganza — the U.S. Open — has come to town.

It’s the final day of practice before the first round of the tournament. The normally spacious Shinnecock is crowded with huge, white corporate tents and colossal, shiny grandstands. Golf fans, who have come to see Tiger, Ernie and Lefty play one last tension-free round before they put on their game faces, swarm onto the historic course like carpenter ants invading a picnic.

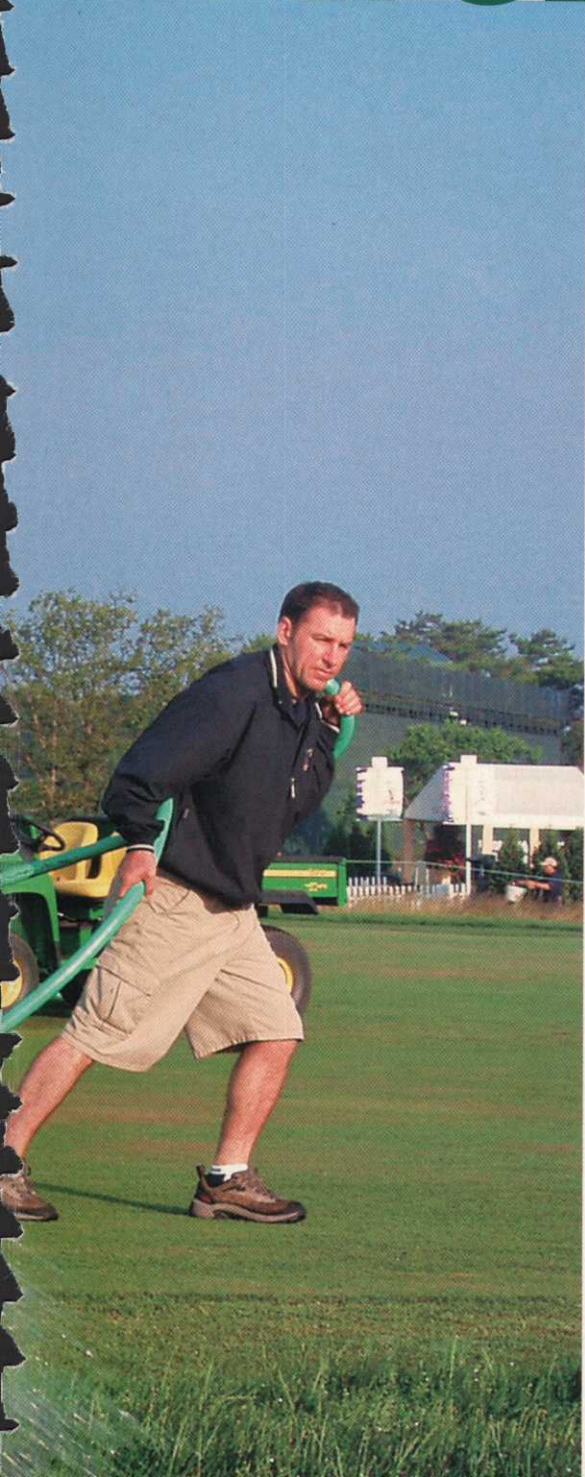
One wonders what the tall, slender Crawford, who hails from the Channel Islands, is thinking while he watches the circus-like activity unfold around him. Crawford, a volunteer on Shinnecock’s golf course maintenance crew for the tournament, wears a look of awe on his face as he takes in this spectacle of a sporting event.

“It’s definitely bigger than I thought,” the ruddy-faced Crawford says of the U.S. Open, which seems to grow more enormous each year. “It’s just huge. Absolutely huge.”

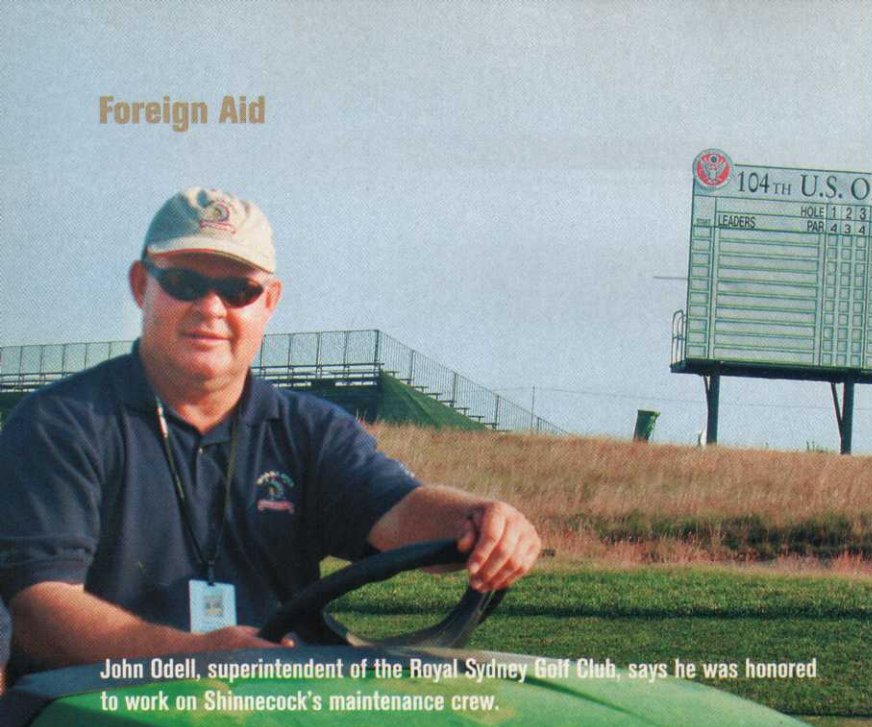
Crawford, 58, is the course manager for Royal Jersey Golf Club, an esteemed course on the Channel Islands, which are located in the English Channel off the coast of Normandy, France. He’s one of about 10 international volunteers who traveled great distances to be part of Shinnecock’s beefed-up maintenance crew, which also includes about 60 American volunteers. Many of the international volunteers spent their own money to travel to New York. Several trekked 12,000 miles from Australia. Others are from South Africa and Canada. They have one thing in common: They are here to experience the thrill of one of the world’s great sporting events.

“I’m just honored to have been accepted as a volunteer,” says John Odell, superintendent of the Royal Sydney Golf Club in Sydney, Australia.

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(Left photo) Australian volunteers Bruce Kemp (left) and Mark Parker manned the heavy hoses and watered the rough during the U.S. Open. (Top photo) Dave Crawford came all the way from the Channel Islands to work on the golf maintenance crew’s divot repair team. American volunteer Bob York, from BASF Professional Turf, stands behind Crawford.



John Odell, superintendent of the Royal Sydney Golf Club, says he was honored to work on Shinnecock's maintenance crew.

"We've got guys from the top-100 courses in the world, and we're raking bunkers. But who cares?"

GARY DEMPSEY,
NEW SOUTH WALES
GOLF CLUB, AUSTRALIA

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"I'll cherish every day here no matter what I'm doing — raking bunkers, watering rough or picking up divots."

Mark Michaud, Shinnecock's superintendent, welcomes the international volunteers with open arms. He's indebted to them for traveling across the globe to work their tails off for him. Michaud also knows the volunteers will learn new things and meet new friends. "There are people here who will make lifelong friends," he says.

Like all of the maintenance crew workers, Crawford wears a blue polo shirt and tan cap emblazoned with the Shinnecock logo. He holds a small blue bucket filled with dirt in his gloved hand. Crawford is part of a three-person crew that fills fairway divots.

It's the first time Crawford has volunteered for a tournament of such magnitude. He is very businesslike, even while performing the menial task. He fills each divot with dirt and pats the area meticulously with his hand. He works swiftly and doesn't talk much.

It's amusing to see the greatest superintendents in the world performing such humble tasks on the renowned course. But Gary Dempsey, the 46-year-old superintendent of New South Wales Golf Club in Matraville, Australia, says he doesn't care how servile or mundane the work is.

"We've got guys from the top-100 courses in the world, and we're raking bunkers," says Dempsey, who sports a long, shaggy mustache and a sunburned face. "But who cares?

We're pitching in. We're not looking for glory."

"It's about having pride in what you're doing," Crawford adds. "There's no point in doing any job unless you do it properly and well."

Crawford arrived at Shinnecock on Sunday, four days before the official start of the tournament and one day before the first practice round. When Crawford tells others he's from Royal Jersey Golf Club, they think he's from *New Jersey*.

"My perception is that few people know where the Channel Islands are," Crawford says. "I've had a great problem explaining to people where I'm from."

The Channel Islands, under British rule, are home to about 162,000 people. Crawford, whose 126-year-old course is located on the island of Jersey, wrote Michaud about visiting Shinnecock, and Michaud invited him to work on the crew.

Like many of the workers, Crawford looks a tad tired from working round-the-clock the past few days. Bags have formed under his eyes. "I've never had them before," Crawford announces, only half-jokingly.

Most of the volunteers bunk at Southampton College, a short walk from Shinnecock's maintenance facility. Southampton College is no Sheraton, but the volunteers don't mind. They're so tired at the end of the day that they just want a place to crash. Their rooms feature two beds and a bathroom. There are no TVs, and they must share showers.

The sound of surging shower water awoke Crawford at 3:30 this morning. It wasn't a rude awakening, though. The guys have been pumped to get to work, Crawford says.

The days take on a familiar refrain. The volunteers meet at the maintenance facility at 4 a.m. and work from about 4:30 to 8:30 a.m. They eat breakfast and some go back to the dorm for naps. They return to the maintenance facility (if they ever left it) around 11 a.m. to eat lunch, hang out or watch some golf. They eat dinner at 4 p.m. before heading back out on the course for the late-day and evening chores. Most are showered and in bed by 10 p.m.

Shinnecock looks ruggedly handsome on this morning. The golden- and red-hued rough, comprised of long fescue and

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bluestem grasses, waves slightly in the wind. The closely-cropped fairways and greens look smooth and sleek.

Shinnecock's good looks impress volunteer Sue De Zwart, superintendent of Leopard Creek Country Club in Malelane, South Africa. "It's so close to perfection, it's scary," says De Zwart, who has also volunteered at four Masters in the past seven years.

It took De Zwart 18 hours to travel from South Africa to New York. The 29-year-old, one of two female superintendents in South Africa, worked as an intern for Michaud in 1996-1997

when he was the superintendent at Pebble Beach Golf Links. "Mark is my mentor, and I wanted to work this U.S. Open with him," she says.

The U.S. Open is getting to be old hat for a few Australian volunteers, who tend turf at some of the finest tracks Down Under. However, the thrill of working at such an event is not gone. "You feel really privileged to be here," says Dempsey says, volunteering at his third U.S. Open.

Some of the Australians are friends with the renowned Paul R. Latshaw, the former superintendent of several great U.S. golf

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Drawing Comparisons

Courses are similar, but ...

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR

It's after 6 p.m. and the wind kicks up on Shinnecock Hills Golf Club. The course's tall, distinguished rough waves in the wind.

Shinnecock's 100-person golf course maintenance staff, which includes about 70 volunteers, is busy at work on the course to ready it for Wednesday's practice round of the U.S. Open. Many of the crew's members won't finish until after dark.

Working after dark? That's something Sue De Zwart, superintendent of Leopard Creek Country Club in Malelane, South Africa, and a volunteer on the Shinnecock crew, wouldn't dare do at her course. They

don't call the course Leopard Creek for nothing.

"We can't work on the course at night because we could be attacked," De Zwart says, noting that leopards are sighted frequently on the course.

Two giraffes and one hippopotamus also live on the property. "We're used to repairing animal damage," De Zwart says.

That's not to say that Leopard Creek doesn't have anything in common with Shinnecock Hills. In fact, most all of the international superintendents who volunteered at Shinnecock during the U.S. Open said their courses bear resemblance to Shinnecock. For one, De Zwart must battle the weather at Leopard Creek and is under pressure to keep the course's greens in excellent shape, just like superintendents must do at Shinnecock and other American courses.

"Climate is our biggest challenge," De Zwart says. "We'll have temperatures in the high 90 and into the low 100s with high humidity, and we have to maintain bentgrass greens. The trick is to try to keep them hard, fast and alive."

Dave "D.J." Crawford, superintendent of Royal Jersey Golf Club on the Channel Islands, says his course is similar to Shinnecock in that it's a links-style course with creeping red fescue that's located on a windy site. A cold northeasterly wind blows through and often causes desiccation.

Royal Jersey's maintenance facility is worlds apart from Shinnecock's new digs, however. Crawford explains that his maintenance facility was actually a fort the British used to protect themselves from the French during the Napoleonic wars. The 60-yard by 60-yard facility is nearly 350 years old and

features 14-foot-high granite walls.

Gary Dempsey, the superintendent of New South Wales Golf Club in Matraville, Australia, says his seaside course is a cross between Shinnecock, Pebble Beach and Cypress Point. "It's a pretty special place," he says.

Interestingly, the "Augusta Syndrome" wreaks its havoc on superintendents across the globe, not just U.S. superintendents. When British television began broadcasting the Masters in color, Crawford says golfers saw the lush, green turf at Augusta and began lobbying for similar conditions at the courses they played.

Golfers also like fast greens in foreign places. The greens run about 11 feet at New South Wales Golf Club. By the way, the members of golf courses in countries like the Australia are also as demanding as American golfers when it comes to green speed.

"That's universal," Dempsey says of the modern-day golfer's expectations.

Interestingly, most of the international volunteers have been superintendents at their respective courses for many years. They don't jump from job to job every few years like many U.S. superintendents.

"People have asked me, 'Have you ever fancied moving on?' " Crawford says. "It has crossed my mind, and I've had opportunities to move on. But I like the environment there and the golf course."

Mark Parker, superintendent of Concord (Australia) Golf Club, says he doesn't want to leave the Sydney area because most of his family lives there.

"That's a major factor for me," says Parker, who's expecting his first child in October. "I want to be close to them."



South African superintendent Sue De Zwart wouldn't dare work after dark at Leopard Creek Country Club.

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courses, including Congressional Country Club. Latshaw was the keynote speaker at an Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association meeting in the early 1990s. He invited some of the Australians, including Dempsey, to work on his crew during the 1997 U.S. Open at Congressional.

It is also volunteer Bruce Kemp's third U.S. Open. Kemp, who owns one of the few turf product distributors in Sydney, volunteered at Congressional and again at Pebble



Shinnecock Hills was a father and son reunion for Glenn (left) and Garry Dawson, who hail from Canberra, Australia. Glenn came to Shinnecock last year as an intern on the maintenance crew. Garry, who teaches in the department of horticulture at the Canberra Institute of Technology, hadn't seen his son in several months before traveling to Shinnecock to volunteer on the crew.

Beach Golf Links when the Open was there in 2000. He says the tournament has grown. "It's amazing how much bigger it is."

In his three U.S. Opens, the well-toned Kemp has rolled greens, fluffed rough and is watering rough at Shinnecock. When asked what his reaction would be if the players complain that the rough is too severe, Kemp says with a wry smile, "I'm going to enjoy that."

Speaking of players complaining, two international volunteers — Greig Barker and Nathan Strong — find themselves in the thick of controversy on the tournament's final day. The two comprise the team that must syringe the seared seventh green in front of thousands of people during the final round of play.

Barker, assistant superintendent of North Halton Golf & Country Club in Georgetown, Ontario, says he wanted to volunteer on the Shinnecock crew so he could gain big-tournament experience, but he probably never expected this.

Because he's part of the syringe team, Barker is like a doctor on call and must stay close to

the action. (In hindsight, Barker and Strong probably had the most important job of the tournament on the final day.) "I'll rest when I go home," the strapping 28-year old Barker says.

Most of the international volunteers say they want to learn the latest about turf management during their trips to Shinnecock.

Mark Parker, superintendent of Concord (Australia) Golf Club, has come to see the latest in technology. John Deere supplied support equipment for the U.S. Open — everything from mowers and bunker rakes to utility vehicles and portable power equipment — and Parker is impressed.

"The technology and research here is a few years ahead of Australia," says the 37-year-old Parker, who has worked at the 105-year-old Concord for 17 years, the last 16 as superintendent. "We have to come here to stay on top of it."

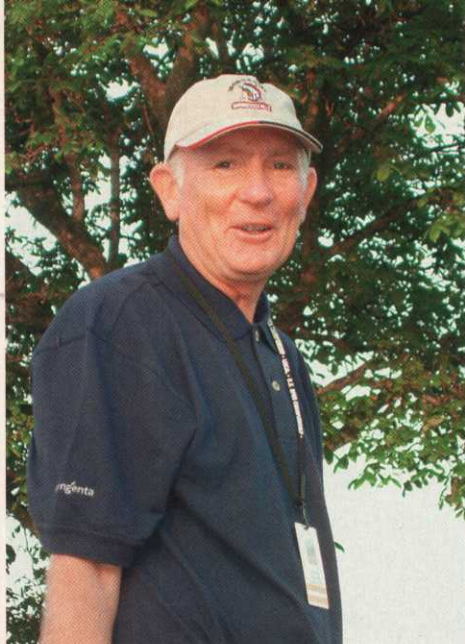
Parker has been to the United States before. In fact, he was introduced to Turf Seed's Penn A's and G's bentgrass varieties in 1995 when he came to the country on a study tour. When Concord renovated its greens in 1997, Parker chose A-4 for the regrassing. "We've had the greens now for seven years, and they've been fantastic," he says.

It's the first time the 47-year-old Odell, who has been superintendent at Royal Sydney for 16 years, has volunteered at an American tournament. It's also the first time he's seen fairways dragged with leaded rope to rid them of dew.

"What a great idea, and how simple," he says.



Greig Barker, an assistant superintendent from Canada, says he wanted to volunteer on the crew to gain some big-tournament experience.



"I came here with a will to learn," says Dave Crawford, who recently celebrated his 25th anniversary as superintendent at Royal Jersey Golf Club.

still experience a few communication gaffes with the Americans. While relaxing in the maintenance facility, Crawford asks a tired and sweaty Bob York, a volunteer from BASF Professional Turf, what he's drinking.

"It's Powerade," York says of the sports drink. "It refills your body's electrolytes."

A sour expression forms on Crawford's face. "You reckon I'm a battery?" he says.

Both men chuckle after realizing their misinterpretation. It's only mid-week, but it has already been the experience of a lifetime for Crawford, who recently celebrated his 25th anniversary as superintendent of Royal Jersey. Crawford is pushing 60 and retirement looms. Volunteering at the U.S. Open is something he has always wanted to do.

"I came here with a will to learn," Crawford says convincingly in his thick English accent.

He leaves Shinnecock Hills with memories to burn. ■

"I can't get over it — they're so friendly. They won't let you put your hand in your pocket."

BRUCE KEMP,
AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER

The international volunteers say they've hit it off well with their American counterparts. They rave about the hospitality they've received.

"I can't get over it — they're so friendly," Kemp says of the other American crew workers. "It's embarrassing at times. They won't let you put your hand in your pocket."

While all of the international volunteers hail from English-speaking countries, some

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