

gun, I'd shoot you right now." And his wife was told via e-mail that the community was going to run them out of town.

But Woodward didn't flinch. "I never took it personally. They were just trying to protect their access to their golf course," he says. "People who come here have a certain reverence about it. You just know it's special. When you stand on the clubhouse deck and look out over the ocean, it's almost a spiritual experience."

Woodward never cowered. He championed his business plan in the local media and among the loyal municipal golfers, and he not only turned around Torrey Pines' conditioning, he cut the deficit at historic Balboa Park Golf Course in half.

Balboa, also a William P. Bell design like Torrey Pines, was losing almost \$1 million a year when Woodward arrived, primarily because user fees were too low to sustain operations. He implemented new fee structures, and he says the deficit will drop even more once the facility installs a new irrigation system and makes other planned upgrades.

If Woodward shows the same fortitude leading the GCSAA, then superintendents should be in good hands.

## The "It's Not About Me" Award

### STEVE COOK

GOLF COURSE MANAGER/CERTIFIED SUPERINTENDENT  
OAKLAND HILLS COUNTRY CLUB

His employees rave about him. They say they couldn't have a better boss than Steve Cook, the golf course manager of Oakland Hills Country Club, site of this year's PGA Championship.

"Ninety-eight percent of the things I do here on a daily basis come from what Steve Cook taught me when I was there," says Jeff Frentz, the certified superintendent of Lake Shore Country Club in



Glencoe, Ill., who worked for eight years under Cook at Oakland Hills. "I couldn't have had a better mentor."

Cook oversees golf maintenance at one of the top clubs in the country. But you won't catch him bragging. Cook didn't set out to be a star superintendent at a headline club. His chief goal is to be a solid mentor to those who work for him.

Cook doesn't take a my-way-or-the-highway approach. Benjamin McGargill, superintendent of the Oakland Hills' South Course, says Cook empowers him and other staff members to do their jobs.

"He lets us do our thing," McGargill says. "He gives us the reins." There are times, Cook admits, when somebody is doing a job one way that he would rather see done another way. But Cook keeps his mouth shut because he has learned that his way is not always the best way.

"I don't have all the answers, and I'm not ashamed to admit that," he says.

Cook's it's-not-about-me approach is refreshing, indeed.

## The "Be As You Are" Award

### BILL MURRAY

GREENKEEPER

DOUBLE EAGLE GOLF CLUB

He was born into this world as Bill Murray. He just so happens to look like — you guessed it — the actor Bill Murray. And he makes his livelihood in the golf course maintenance industry, just like the actor Murray's character Carl Spackler did in "Caddyshack."

This Bill Murray is 43 years old and a member of superintendent Todd Voss' maintenance crew at the Double Eagle Club in Galena, Ohio. It's a coincidence that Murray ended up with the actor Murray's name, who helped put the profession of golf course maintenance on the map in the 1980 film when he was cast as the oddball assistant golf course

superintendent who toked on turf, lived like a slob and displayed a combative side, at least when it came to gophers.



It would be understandable if Double Eagle's Murray distanced himself from Murray's "Caddyshack" character and demanded to be called "William." But Murray not only rolls with the situation, he has a blast with it. "I've had a lot of fun kidding around with it," he says.

He has the goofy Spackler facial looks from "Caddyshack" down to a science. He knows the movie's lines like the back roads home to his house. "My enemy, my foe, is an animal," Murray might mutter to a co-worker. "In order to conquer the animal, I have to learn to think like an animal. And, whenever possible, to look like one. I've gotta get inside this guy's pelt and crawl around for a few days."

In a previous job as a bartender, Murray dressed up as the Spackler character. "I bought a hat, let my beard grow for three days, put some dirt on face and dressed in a raggedy-old T-shirt and some Army fatigues," he says.

One time in the bar, a customer told Murray that he looked like the actor. When Murray told the customer that Bill Murray was his name, the guy said he would give him a 50 percent tip on his \$120 bill if he could prove it. Murray showed him his driver's license and was \$60 richer.

One thing is for sure: Voss doesn't have to worry about Murray going off on gophers at Double Eagle. Murray, who has worked on the crew for about two seasons, is a reliable and capable worker.

"I love having him on the crew because he has seen it all and enjoys all the work on the course," Voss says. "He never complains and works seven days a week."

Voss says he wouldn't be surprised if Murray became a superintendent some day. "Now wouldn't that be ironic," Voss says.

Maybe Murray was born for it. ■