

**I**t's a small team that we have here at *Golfdom*. Beth Geraci is our senior editor, and Carrie Parkhill Wallace is our art director. The three of us make up the magazine's full-time editorial staff. We round out the rest of the crew with a team of expert freelancers from around the country. That includes our writers, columnists and photographers.

Considering our small full-time crew, it's unusual for both me and Beth to spend a lot of time with one of our writers. Usually one of us handles a story from beginning to end, and then we both look it over before ink hits paper, paper hits mailboxes.

That was not the case with this month's cover story. In fact, this story, penned by former superintendent Jay Charnes, has been in the works for over a year and included two trips to Louisville, Ky., three visits to two sod farms, one backyard barbecue and even one trip to church.

Jay first emailed me about wanting to do a story about the situation he found himself in (read: *soon-to-be unemployed*) in February of 2011. Some 18 months later, we're proud of the story he crafted for our magazine.

In June of 2011, Beth was invited to attend an industry event (which included a NASCAR race — it's hard work we do here) in Louisville. I gave Jay a call and asked him if he would be willing to meet with Beth and show her a golf course or two.

She got the VIP tour of Louisville golf courses, including a visit to Roger Meier at Valhalla Golf Club, which will host the 2014 PGA Championship. Her Sunday in Louisville started out with a trip to church with Mr. and Mrs. Charnes and ended with a backyard barbecue at the home of Mark Wilson, CGCS, who is well known in our industry as the host superintendent of the 2008 Ryder Cup matches. Beth got much more from her trip than I ever imagined, and we were both thrilled that the magazine made a few new friends in Kentucky.

Fast forward to March, 2012. I was invited to be the keynote speaker at the Kentuckiana GCSA meeting. A normal person would have

## This Old Superintendent

BY SETH JONES



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reached out in advance, telling Jay I'd be in town for the day. Instead I just showed up and hoped he'd be there.

At the end of my talk, I walked to the back of the room. I asked the gentlemen standing next to me, "Hey, do you know Jay Charnes? Is he here?" Turns out Jay was sitting down right next to me. (In fact, I almost asked Jay himself if he knew Jay, and if he was there. I wonder how Jay — who has a quick wit — would have answered?)

I introduced myself and thanked Jay for showing Beth such a great tour a year earlier. The next thing I knew, I was on the Jay Charnes tour myself. But Jay knew better than to try to take me to church — my tour ended at the local Buffalo Wild Wings for a few cold ones with some of the guys from the Kentuckiana GCSA.

Jay's story, "The 5.9%," about the slim number of superintendents who work into their 60s, starts on page 16. Just as our relationship with Jay has evolved over 18 months, so has this story. The first draft was dark. The next draft was more analytical. The final draft is what you can read here, and I'm happy that it includes a hopeful ending in the sidebar about Jay and Mark's new business, Superintendent's Choice Sod.

I'm also happy that our small *Golfdom* team has had the chance to get to know Jay over the last 18 months, and now calls him a friend. In his story, Jay asks the question, "What happens to old superintendents?" I think the answer to that question is different for everyone. But I know one thing: we're better off for having crossed paths with this old superintendent.

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