



"It takes some doing to get to Orwigsburg, Pa. You can't just claim to be in the neighborhood, like I did with both Chojnacky and Kappelman."

SETH JONES, *Editor-in-Chief*

Over hamburgers in Hamburg

The MacKenzie Bar and Grill at Pasatiempo Golf Club in Santa Cruz, Calif. No. 13 green at Sharp Park Golf Course in Pacifica, Calif. And now, the Red Robin in Hamburg, Pa. ¶ *One of these things is not like the others...*

These are the three places where I first told the three winners of the Herb Graffis Businessperson of the Year Award that they were the recipients of *Golfdom's* only (and therefore "most prestigious") award. In 2012 Paul Chojnacky, then at Pasatiempo, now superintendent at Oakridge CC in Utah, was our first winner. Last year I flew to the same part of the country and told Sharp Park's Wayne Kappelman that he was the 2013 honoree.

It takes some doing to get to Orwigsburg, Pa. You can't just claim to be in the neighborhood, like I did with both Chojnacky and Kappelman. Schuylkill Country Club is as hard to get to as it is to spell. It's 90 minutes northwest of

Philadelphia, a picturesque, mountainous setting in the middle of coal country.

Yet I convinced this year's winner, Jim Rattigan, to meet me at a nearby Red Robin for dinner on a Tuesday night in the middle of January for no particular reason.

I had the good fortune of having met Jim previously, while I was on assignment doing my 2013 U.S. Open preview on Merion. A member had invited me out to play the course, telling me I just had to see this Donald Ross beauty and I'd fall in love with it. It didn't matter that not only had I never heard of the course, I also continuously struggled pronouncing its name. (As far as I can tell, you say it *SKOOK-uhl*. That's the pronunciation I gave it in my story, at least.)

That member, Roy Heim, was right. I was instantly impressed by the course, its greens, its stunning panoramic views of the mountains, its hospitable members and its outstanding superintendent/general manager, the aforementioned Mr. Rattigan.

So two weeks ago I met Rattigan for dinner at Red Robin. Over hamburgers and a couple beers, I pitched him the idea for the story you'll find in this issue: Local kid does good. Jim was agreeable.

I decided that over those hamburgers and Yuengling beers was as good a time as any. I went ahead and told Jim that, based on what I knew of him and the work he had done, and based on conversations with Roy and

others, I would be naming him the 2014 Herb Graffis Businessperson of the Year.

Jim's demeanor totally changed. "Are you serious?" he asked me, incredulous. "You're totally blowing me away with this... are you sure I deserve it?"

I told Jim that he has a great story, that he's done a great job, and though it might just be called "doing my job" to him, it was indeed an impressive thing he had done in the past 12 years at Schuylkill CC.

Jim then tried to redirect the credit. He has an incredible team at the course, he told me. Humility. I've come to expect it from supers.

Eventually I got Jimmy on board with the idea. The next day at the course I got him to tell me his whole story. The more I learned, the more I knew: Rattigan personifies what we're looking for with this award.

When Mr. Graffis founded this magazine in 1927, he did it for readers like Rattigan. He knew there were professionals out there like Jim, people probably like you, who pour their souls into making the game profitable. That's what the award embodies: people who strive to make their business the best it can be.

I doubt that Mr. Graffis would have ever imagined his name being thrown about at a Red Robin in Hamburg, Pa. in 2014.

But I guarantee you, he would have been impressed by Jim Rattigan.

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