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## What Is a Leader?

**"Reason and calm judgment, the qualities specially belonging to a leader."**

— Tacitus, Roman historian and orator

*Continued from page 38*

Young superintendents are also advised to obtain college degrees, their peers say. "I encourage people who work for me to get four-year degrees," Petersan says.

Twenty-five years ago, a person could obtain a two-year degree and immediately get a superintendent's job. Today, a four-year degree will get most young people assistant jobs.

Spence says his three assistants each have six years of college and strong scientific backgrounds. "It's not unusual for someone to come out of college and be a first assistant for five to 10 years," he adds.

While college is vital, it's also important for young superintendents to know golf's history and tradition, Spence and Petersan say.

And it's important they learn more on their own to be better positioned for the future, Salinetti says. For instance, they would be smart to enroll in business courses at their local colleges. Salinetti studied the financials of golf as a young superintendent and was named general manager of his club 15 years ago.

"Just don't go home from work and watch 'Seinfeld' reruns," he advises. "Do something productive with your free time."

You must have a passion, concurs Bob Graunke, CGCS of Tidewater GC & Plantation in North Myrtle Beach and a superintendent for more than 30 years.

"You can't do it halfway because you won't last," he says. "You might hang on for a few years, but you won't make the cut unless you have a feeling for nature and a love of the outdoors."

The gurus are impressed with the leadership skills of today's young superintendents. "They are hard-working, high-quality individuals," Petersan says. "I'm encouraged with our future."

Salinetti is also impressed — and intimidated — by today's young superintendents. "They are so well educated and prepared that I wouldn't want to go up against them looking for a new job." ■

*Continued from page 39*

Bill Bianowicz, who I worked under at Litchfield CC. I've also been interested in golf for a long time. I grew up close to Hershey CC in Hershey, Pa. I also did an internship at Pine Valley GC in New Jersey. The greatest part of being a superintendent is working outside. I also like the multifaceted nature of the job — being able to do six things at once.

**What makes you a leader?**

My ability to work with people and understand them and their varying needs.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

I want to be at a place where they want a good golf course and where people appreciate it. I don't want to be at a place where money is the bottom line.

**What's your favorite fast-food restaurant?**

McDonald's, because my young daughter likes the Happy Meal.

**Curry was nominated by himself.**

"I take pride in the kids I've helped, and I try to do everything I can to follow up with their progress," he says.

### Michael Sosik

**Age:** 33

**Course:** Middleton GC, Middleton, Mass.

**Title:** Superintendent

**Education:** Associate's degree in turf management from Essex Agricultural and Technical Institute in Danvers, Mass.

**Mentors:** Jim Wilson, high school carpentry teacher; Jim Passios, facility manager at Middleton GC.

**What inspired you to become a superintendent?**

I love golf, and I knew I wanted to work in the industry. I was most interested in the turf side. As it turns out, I love it.

**What makes you a leader?**

The ability to get along with my employees. You should treat your employees the way you want to be treated. Also,

the most important part of leadership is leading by example. If you can't show people how to do something, you can't expect them to do it for you.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

I would like to be at a high-end course, a private and more elite club where I can better showcase my skills.

**Will the Boston Red Sox ever win a World Series again?**

I'm an avid fan, and someday they will win it. But at this point, I would never bet it will be in my lifetime.

**Sosik was nominated by Steven Brochu, assistant superintendent, and Linda Lacroix, office manager.**

"Mike has taught me more in the two-plus years I've worked here than I learned in four years of college," Brochu says. "Mike comes up with solutions to problems before most people have realized there's a problem. In my opinion, and in the opinion of management and most every golfer, the course has never looked so good." ■



### Partners for Leadership

Golfdom is proud to have two of the industry's oldest leaders helping us salute our Young Leaders. John Deere and The Scotts Company have joined forces to underwrite our program costs and to recognize our 2000 recipients through their corporate customer-ship efforts.



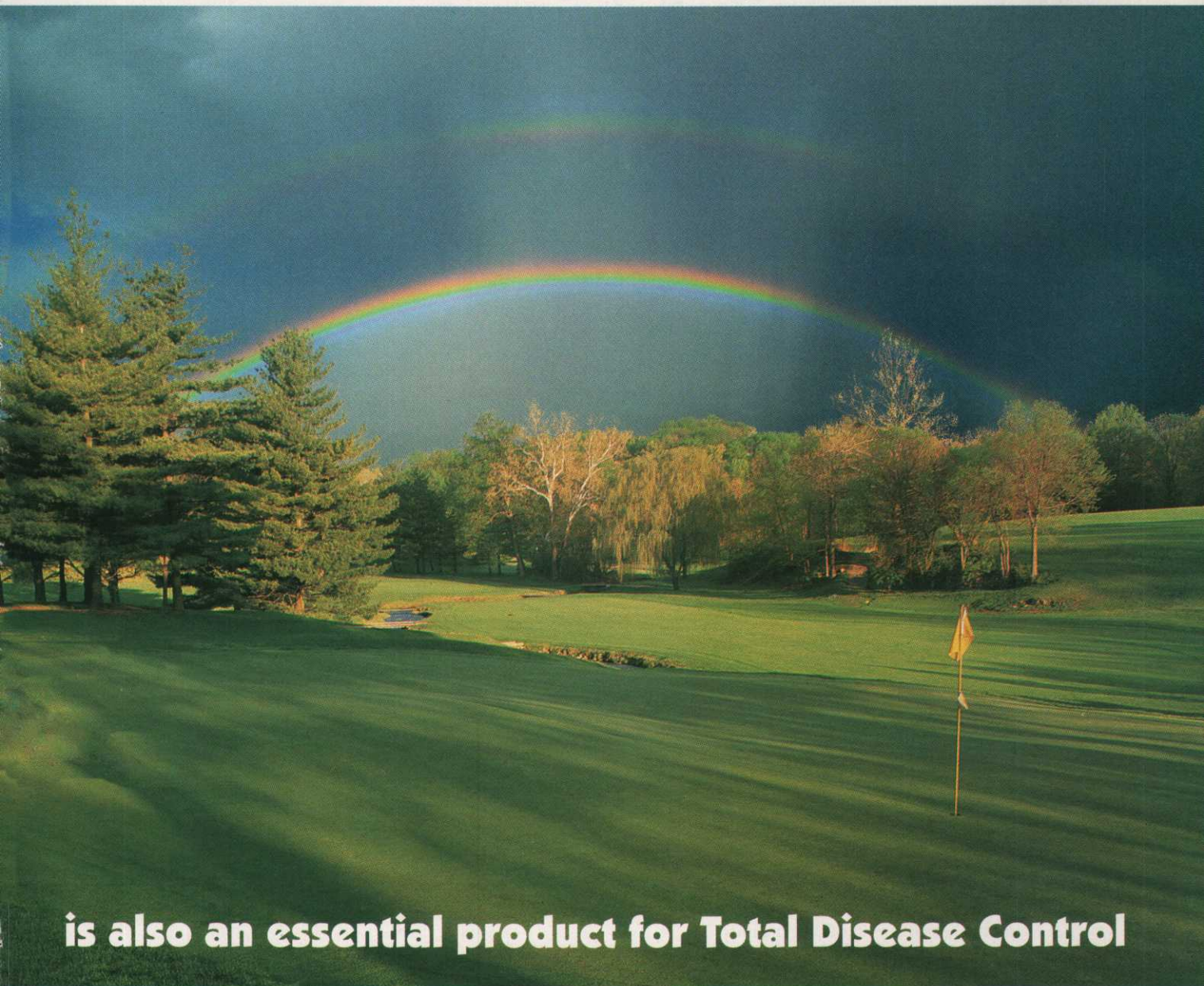
"Deere and Scotts understand the importance of bringing the next generation of leaders to the forefront of the industry," says Golfdom publisher Pat Jones. "It's good business, but it's also good corporate citizenship."

For information on next year's Young Leaders program, contact Jones at 440-891-3126 or [patrick.jones@advanstar.com](mailto:patrick.jones@advanstar.com).



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No possibility that the good, bad and absolutely fabulous business of growing grass would exist for me had it not been for a few mentors. If you haven't got one, find one — fast. Let me say that again. If you don't have a turfgrass guru, you need one.

Like many in our business, opportunity came to me early. Actually, the opportunity came the first day I met Mike Kosak, who was superintendent at Pole Creek GC in Winter Park, Colo. But I had no idea what "superintendent" meant.

Mike hired me to work on his summer crew during a golf course grow-in. It was my dream come true. I fell in love with what we were doing. That was 17 years ago, and Mike is still a superintendent at Lahontan GC in Truckee, Calif., and also the financial partner in the company he works for. He's too humble to list his successful projects, but they are world-class. He remains today a friend and someone I continue to admire. I've often said thanks, but I've never figured out a way to really express my gratitude for his impact on my life.

There have been other mentors. As I look back, I see that I allowed myself the opportunity to be influenced by people I respected for their abilities. I'll bet dollars to doughnuts to mud-thick coffee that I always will.

Which leads me to my humble advice for today's young superintendents and the graduating classes of 2000 and beyond. Find someone to look up to and learn all they will teach you. Rinse and repeat.

Seek out the amazing talent that can be found in so many places and dedicate yourself to serious apprenticeship. Open your mind and let the knowledge flow in. Arguably, there is no better way to learn.

I'm not talking about the all-too-favorite sport of ticket punching, where simply gaining

## Advice to the Young: Get a Guru

BY DAVE WILBER



IF YOU DON'T  
HAVE A TURFGRASS  
GURU, YOU NEED  
ONE — NOW

the name of a prominent course or famous superintendent on a resume is the means to the end. The ticket puncher is easy to spot in a lineup. If such a person should succeed in fooling anyone for a while, that person will eventually show his or her true colors. That person's method lacks the passion it takes to submit to learning and gaining a true understanding.

On the other hand, the studied apprentice makes a distinguished mark. This person is grateful for each opportunity. Most noticeably, the person continues to seek and find the confidence of an adviser.

I've read a few of today's pop-psychology books on mentoring. I'll save you the time of reading them by paraphrasing their themes in eight points to remember:

- Find a mentor you can look up to.
- Learn all you can from this person.
- Be grateful for the opportunity.
- Remember that frustration is usually part of a true challenge.
- Question, but don't second-guess.
- Say thanks.
- Keep in touch.
- Pass the knowledge along when you feel it's your turn.

Perhaps Jerry Coldiron, CGCS of Boone Links/Lassing Pointe in Florence, Ky., offers the best advice. "The best way to give something back is right in front of us," he says. "We have to take the time and be leaders by mentoring our people."

Spoken like a true turfgrass guru.

Our business is one of continued applied science with a huge heap of real-world knowledge needed to be successful. Seeking a mentor shouldn't be viewed as an option for young superintendents — but regarded as a necessity.

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*Dave Wilber, a Sacramento, Calif.-based agronomist, can be reached at [dave@soil.com](mailto:dave@soil.com).*



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# Land of Hope & Dreams



BY FRANK H. ANDORKA JR., ASSOCIATE EDITOR

These millennium  
kids aspire  
to build their turf  
management careers  
on the golf course

**I**n nature's seduction often works in magical ways. John Nachreiner, now a senior at Michigan State University, experienced an epiphany one day while playing golf in Bozeman, Mont. As he stood in the middle of a lush, green fairway and bald eagles soared above his head, the beauty overwhelmed him. From that moment, he felt the call to work on a golf course.

"Golf never entered my mind until that day," Nachreiner says. "Now I know this is what I was meant to do."

Dreams and aspirations like Nachreiner's form the essential fabric of human life. Almost from the moment human beings emerge from the womb, they strive to achieve what they believe they want. Hope keeps people striving despite setbacks, and it's what inspires them to reach their goals.

As 2000 unfolds, graduates of turf management programs look toward the golf maintenance industry filled with such hopes and dreams. With the help of their professors, *Golfdom* identifies five students whose aspirations are chronicled here. In future years, the magazine will revisit these students to examine their progress.

Kevin Tansey, 22, bussed tables in the kitchen of the Liverpool Golf & CC in Liverpool, N.Y., at 16. As he cleared plates and replaced table linen, he watched people working on the golf course.

"I've always enjoyed working outside, and I would watch the golf course crews from the kitchen and think how nice it would be to do what they were doing," Tansey says. "I talked to the two brothers who owned the course, pulled a few strings and started on the course as an assistant to the mechanic. Once I started, I was hooked."

Still, Tansey says he didn't know he could receive a college degree in turf management until he started looking for colleges in 1995. He discovered the turf management program at the State University of New York at Cobleskill, and he fell in love with the program.

"It was smaller than my high school and I had heard good things about it," Tansey says. "It offered me a great opportunity to do something I wanted to do."

His most recent internship came at the Black Horse CC in Bethpage State Park in Farmingdale, N.Y., where the 2002 U.S. Open will be played. Tansey says he hopes to return to pre-



pare for the Open.

"I look forward to seeing a tournament from the inside," says Tansey, whose dream is to work at a well-known course with a small crew, somewhere in Pennsylvania or Virginia. "I never thought I'd end up in this industry, but I'm glad I'm here now."

The elegance of the game, combined with the lure of working outdoors, drew Steve Richau, 28, to the golf course management program at Lake City Community College in Lake City, Fla. Growing up in Florida, Richau had played golf since he was 7 years old, but had never considered it a career — until he left high school.

After graduation, Richau found work at the Tournament Players Club at Prestancia in Sarasota, Fla. There he met Clayton Estes, who suggested Richau take an assistant superintendent's job at Eagle GC in Broomfield, Colo.

"I wanted to take a break from Florida, so I pursued the opportunity," Richau says. "After working there, it was clear this was what I wanted to do for a living. But I knew I had to get a degree."

Richau turned to Estes, who introduced him to the Lake City program. Richau hasn't regretted his decision. "Being a superintendent gives you an incredible sense of self worth," he says.

In 10 years, Richau says he would like to be a superintendent at a resort or private course somewhere north of Florida.

"I don't necessarily want the most money in the world," Richau says. "I'd just want to be doing something I love."

Ross Pudenz, 22, says his passion for golf courses started on a visit to cousins in Hendersonville, N.C. Pudenz, who grew up on a hog farm in Iowa, decided early that farming wasn't his future. Working outdoors, however, appealed to him. His visit to Hendersonville offered him an outlet. That summer, he worked at Crooked Creek GC.

"I was basically weed-eater boy," Pudenz says. "I figured anyone could grow grass, but I found out after working on that golf course how wrong that per-

ception was. It's a lot like working on a farm and provides a great outlet for rural kids like me."

After his experience in Hendersonville, Pudenz pursued his degree in turf management at Iowa State University. His last internship, at Old Island GC in Kingsport, Tenn, provided him with course construction experience and taught him skills he hopes will put him ahead of others in the class of 2000.

"You should look at getting as much

variety in your internships as possible and gain as much different experience as you can," Pudenz says. "The construction internship gave me a lot of respect for what goes into building a golf course."

Pudenz, who wants to work in the Midwest, says he has a goal of making \$25,000 out of school and progressing to between \$40,000 to \$50,000 within 10 years.

He says he also believes the golf industry should start looking at farming communities to recruit workers in today's tight labor market.

An Iowa farm community also produced Andy Thompson. Thompson, 28, lived down the street from Davenport CC in Pleasant Valley, Iowa, and his love for the game led him to work for the course.

"If I wasn't golfing on the course, I was doing something on it," Thompson says. "It was just a natural for me to get into this business."

Thompson says he worked in the kitchen of the country club at night and mowed lawns during the day before he decided golf course management would be his career. In 1996, he enrolled in a few community college classes before pursuing a degree.

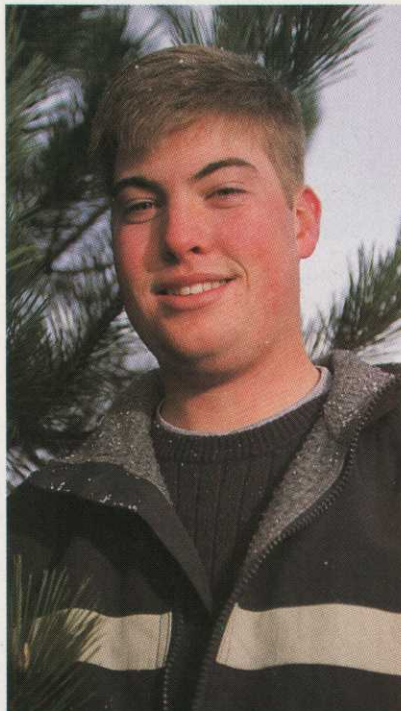
That's when his mentor, Davenport CC superintendent Scott Azinger (who is PGA Tour pro Paul's first cousin), stepped in.

"He said the only school he was going to recommend to me was Penn State University because that's where he graduated from," Thompson says, laughing. "I worked hard and my grades came up. With Scott's help, I got into Penn State's two-year program."

Thompson worked last summer at the Old Elm Club in Highland Park, Ill., a small private club that hosts only 6,000



Ross Pudenz



WILL WALDRON

**"I would watch the golf course crews from the kitchen and think how nice it would be to do what they were doing."**

KEVIN TANSEY  
student

*Continued on page 48*



## Hope & Dreams

*Continued from page 47*  
rounds per year.

Since the club is so small, Thompson says he received personal attention from Edward W. Fischer, the superintendent, and he saw every aspect of golf course maintenance up close.

"I got as much experience in that one internship as I could have gotten in three internships at larger courses," Thompson says. "It was a real eye-opener."

Thompson says he wants a starting salary slightly higher than \$20,000. He ultimately hopes to work on a small course in the country, buy a farm near the course and live a quiet life away from the bustle of the big city.

"You're not going to become Bill Gates in this business," Thompson says. "Your payoff, however, is waking up every day to the sunrise."

Shortly after his life-changing incident, Nachreiner moved to Tucson, Ariz. and found a job with Wally Dow, su-

**"You're not going to become Bill Gates in this business. Your payoff, however, is waking up every day to the sunrise."**

**ANDY THOMPSON**  
*Superintendent of the future*

perintendent at Ventana Canyon GC in Tucson, Ariz. Dow, a 1991 graduate of Michigan State, later recommended Nachreiner to the school as a student

and is now on the verge of graduating with a degree in turf management.

Nachreiner says his most valuable internship came this past summer at Oswego Lake CC in Lake Oswego, Ore., where he learned the people management skills he thinks will make him stand out from his peers. "I learned how to smooth over troubles on crews and getting people from different backgrounds to work together," he says.

Nachreiner says his ideal job would find him on Michigan's western coast, at a private club where there's a commitment to excellence — and a budget to match. Nachreiner says he hopes to making \$80,000 in 10 years.

"I'm going to be doing something I love to do," he says. "You can't ask for much more than that." ■

*Golfdom will revisit these students every year to examine their progress toward their dreams.*

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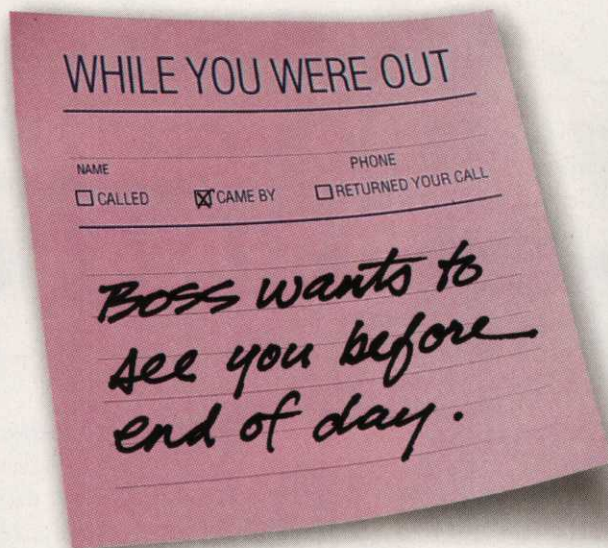


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**A**n informal survey of the three superintendents who still speak to me revealed there's one element key to survival and success in the golf course maintenance business. Disturbingly, it's an element of which many of the well-educated young leaders coming into the business have little understanding. We're talking about the basics of golf.

The turf schools and apprenticeships preparing tomorrow's superintendents have never been better in educating the younger set about turf maintenance and organizational skills. But when it comes to understanding some of the simplest elements of the game — namely history and architecture — there seems to be a lack of genuine understanding.

If you want to thrive in this business, a little knowledge of history and architecture will make your jobs easier and more fun. It also could be the difference between getting a good job and a great one.

Here's an example: A young superintendent gets his dream job at a nice country club. The green chairman knows everything about everything. The young superintendent knows his stuff, too, but has always focused his studies on turf and doesn't know how to talk golf as well as he should. Then it comes time for the green chairman's inevitable oddball ideas on redesigning the course. As a result of his lack of understanding, the young superintendent doesn't know how to articulately explain to his boss that the idea of strategically placed flower beds preventing Tiger from using his driver on No. 14 is, well, not a natural fit on a golf course.

But a basic knowledge of architecture can help the young superintendent form a sound response. Then the green chairman realizes he's barking up the wrong tree and tucks the idea away (for now anyway).

The truth is, most golfers are an easy group to please. Most just want to be listened to. So let them tell their boring stories on how they played the back nine or their observations on their home course design. But you must have the knowledge to respond intelligently and throw some golf talk back at them. Most golfers will listen to you and respect your skills as a superintendent because of it.

## It's Smart Thinking to Grasp Golf 101

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



A KNOWLEDGE OF  
THE GAME WILL  
MAKE A YOUNG  
SUPERINTENDENT'S  
JOB MORE  
ENJOYABLE

To watch veterans of the maintenance business handle lame proposals is a thing of beauty. Inevitably, the old guys' knowledge of history, lingo and architecture gives them more than enough credibility to weed out the freakish ideas, and the humility to take in the rare good ones.

But how do you take that quick Golf 101 class that the turf schools don't offer? Well, a little reading goes a long way. There are plenty of great books that can give you a nice, painless overview of the game. For superintendents, there is also much needed information on design.

If you want historical knowledge or some background in golf basics, the writings of Charles Price and Dan Jenkins offer the most fun reads. Even though most of their works are out of print, you can find them by searching a good used book Web site, such as [abebooks.com](http://abebooks.com).

Architecture is even easier to take a crash course in because many of the best reads are still in print. But be warned: Once you get into the elements of architecture, you might become a junkie. It can be that much fun. I've yet to meet a top-notch, well-paid superintendent who did not have a share of architectural expertise.

For starters, Tom Doak's "The Anatomy of a Golf Course" provides an easy read along with plenty of knowledge on the practical side of things. If you want more, check out George Thomas's "Golf Architecture in America." No person has ever opened this book and not become fascinated with design.

Don't take this personally, young leaders, but you need to know the basics of golf and architecture to be more successful superintendents. Such knowledge just might make your jobs more satisfying, too.

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*Geoff Shackelford is the author of several books on architecture which he promises not to shamelessly self-promote if you e-mail him for a list of his favorite golf reads at [geoffshackelford@aol.com](mailto:geoffshackelford@aol.com).*