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# Not Just Everyday

Integrity rules, as these golf industry folks attest

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF





With another year coming to a close, it's time to hand out some awards to recognize certain golf industry individuals for their achievements. But these awards are not for formal accomplishments, such as Best Golf Course Superintendent in the Universe. They're granted to those whose actions reflect integrity. And Lord knows the world can use more of that.

So let's get to it. Please hold your applause until all awards have been presented. And congratulations to this year's honorees.

# People



The Year  
in Review

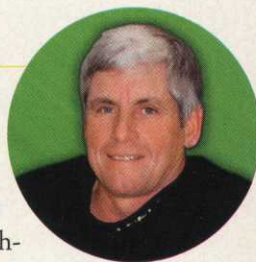
# 26

## He's Got Guts Award

**MATT SHAFFER**

GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT  
MERION GOLF CLUB,  
ARDMORE, PA.

Superintendents need someone like Matt Shaffer because he has the fortitude to discuss topics that others don't want to touch with a 10-foot bunker rake.



Take superintendents' salaries, for instance. A lot of superintendents know how they feel about the issue — that they should make more than some of their courses' equivalents — but they might not want to talk about how they feel in fear of repercussions, like the hammer coming down on them from their respective general managers.

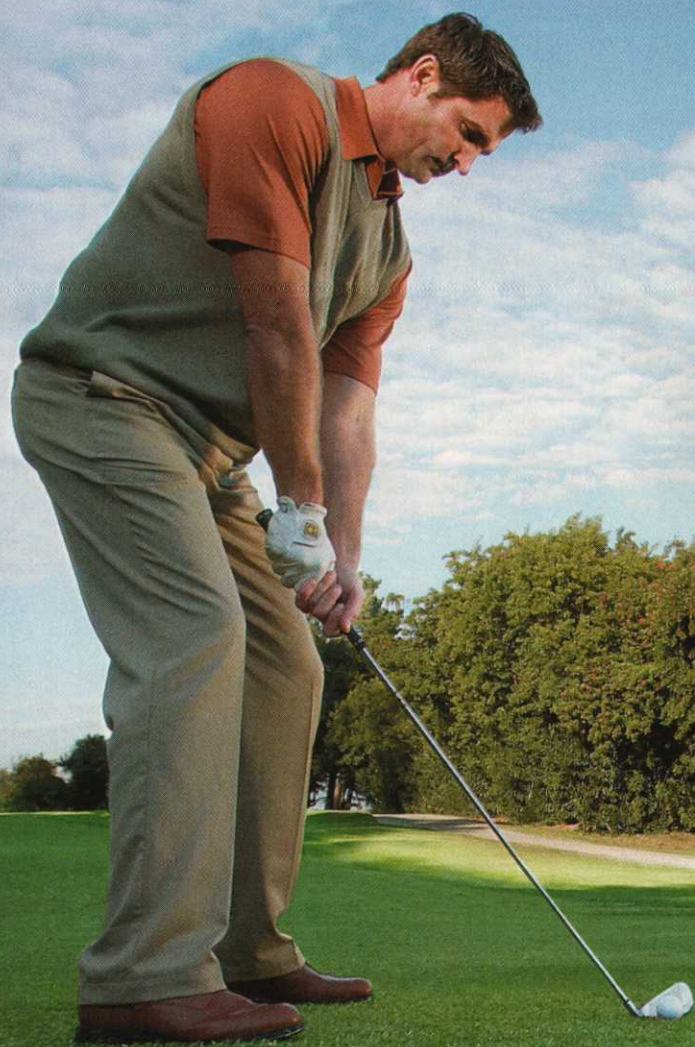
But not Shaffer, who says superintendents wear more hats than pros and general managers. "Superintendents today are obviously better educated, and we are equal to or better than any other person on the property," Shaffer told *Golfdom* earlier this year. "We ought to be compensated accordingly, but I don't necessarily think that's the case."

Next time any of you superintendents see Shaffer, you can thank him for speaking up about your pay raises.

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### True-Blue Award

**PETER CAREW AND FRED FREDERICKSON**

SUPERINTENDENT AND PGA GOLF PRO  
BRECHTEL MEMORIAL PARK  
MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE,  
NEW ORLEANS, LA.

Peter Carew and Fred Frederickson, like thousands of others, could have bolted New Orleans for a chance at better lives after Hurricane Katrina devastated their city. But they stayed home to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives, which included the place they've each worked for more than 20 years — a modest golf course known as Brechtel.

On Dec. 1, about three months after Katrina struck, Brechtel reopened. It didn't take long for the course's parking lot to fill up with cars belonging to people from all walks of life. And those people played Brechtel's damaged and dirt-brown greens without complaining.

"People were coming up and thanking me and shaking my hand," Carew said. "And I had never seen a golf course that looked so bad."

Carew knew the anguished people needed to escape to a place like Brechtel. They had lost so much. They needed to go somewhere they could forget about what had happened to them, even if just for the time it takes to play nine or 18 holes.

He and Frederickson gave it to them.

Frederickson, who was born and raised in New Orleans, helped Carew clean up Brechtel after the hurricane so it could reopen.

"Fred came out with his gloves on and said he'd do whatever I wanted him to do," said Carew, noting he never could have reopened the course without Frederickson's assistance.

They are a dynamic duo, indeed.

"This is my bread and butter," Frederickson said. "If the course isn't open, I don't make any money. I have a family to feed."



### Iron Man Award

**STEVE MONA**

CEO, GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



Steve Mona was the kid who never missed a day of school. He has grown up to be the man who never misses a day of work.

Last month, Mona celebrated his 13th anniversary as GCSAA's chief. Mona hasn't missed a day of work in those 13 years.

Amazing.

He chalks it up to his healthy lifestyle. A famous Biblical verse states, "Your body is your temple, worship it." That's Mona's mantra. He has about as much fat on him as a skinless chicken breast.

Another neat thing about Mona is the respect he commands from others, from the association's members to the janitor at the GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kan. They respect Mona because he respects them.

You never hear anybody bash Mona, which is astonishing considering that he's a CEO in America, and CEOs in America are supposed to get bashed.

It says a lot about the man.

### Mega Modesty Award

**DAVID BEATTIE**

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY GOLF CLUB,  
COLUMBUS, OHIO



David Beattie had been the assistant superintendent at Ohio State for 24 years. So when his boss Gary Rasor announced he was retiring in the spring after 36 years, the last 20 as superintendent, Beattie was primed for a promotion.

But it didn't happen.

Ohio State elected to hire Dennis Bowsher, a very capable superintendent with more than 20 years of experience at courses in several states. Bowsher, an OSU alum, longed to return to his home state. It was a good fit.

But what about Beattie? A lot of guys might have said "take this job and shove it" after being passed over at a place where they'd shed 24 years of blood, sweat and tears.

But not Beattie. One of the first things he did when he found out about who was hired as superintendent was contact Bowsher and congratulate him.

"He was the first one to call me," Bowsher said months later, still impressed.

Beattie was as genuine as 14-carat gold ring.

"I welcomed [Bowsher] with open arms," the 46-year-old Beattie said. "The department made an excellent decision on whom to bring in."

In October Bowsher said: "Now that I've worked a full season with him, I have even a greater opinion of him."



## Helping Hand Award

**STEVE SARRO**

GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT  
VAIL GOLF CLUB, COLO.



After Hurricane Katrina wrecked the Gulf Coast, we all wanted to jump in our cars, drive there and lend a helping hand. Few of us did.

But Steve Sarro went. And he took a crew of people with him.

Last March, Sarro organized a group of 30 golf course management professionals from Colorado and Wyoming to travel to New Orleans to help four golf courses, two private and two municipal, recover from the hurricane's damage.

Sarro and his assembly, including several superintendents and turf students, drove to New Orleans from Colorado Springs in a caravan of vans. They spent almost a week working at the Tournament Players Club of Louisiana, English Turn Golf & Country Club, the Golf Club at Audubon Park and Brechtel Memorial Park Municipal Golf Course.

"I'm just trying to help others," Sarro said. "I've always heard that your time means more than your money."

When the golf season ended in Colorado in 2005, Sarro began to visualize the trip. Others might have stopped there, too busy to chase it. But Sarro pursued it fervently. He got others on board to help make his vision become reality. They raised \$30,000 for the trip, including substantial donations from Syngenta Professional Products and Ewing Irrigation.

"What we did may have seemed small in the beginning, but we left one hell of an impression down there," Sarro said.

"It's a blessing," said Walker Sory, superintendent of the Golf Club at Audubon Park, where the volunteers worked cleaning up the course's deteriorated bunkers. "They came at just the right time."

## Take This Job and Love It Award

**BRUCE WILLIAMS**

CERTIFIED SUPERINTENDENT  
THE LOS ANGELES COUNTRY CLUB, CALIF.



You've heard the talk that we shouldn't take our work so seriously. Our jobs and the stress they cause us can kill us.

Bullfeathers, says Bruce Williams.

What's wrong with working for a living and loving it?

Williams adores what he does. I'd bet no superintendent loves his job more. Work is one of the most important things in Williams' life.

But last year, after Williams underwent a seven-way bypass, it was easy to assume the stress brought on by his frenetic work pace had caught up with him. It was a wake-up call for Williams to stop and smell the freshly cut fairways.

Wrong, Williams said. Lying in that hospital bed recovering from his surgery, one of the things Williams missed most about his life was the stress of his job. "That's because I thrive on stress," he said. "I couldn't wait to get back to the action."

After his surgery, the doc told Williams that six weeks was the minimum time he should take off to recover. Six weeks later, Williams was back in his chair at the L.A. Country Club. And he was stressing out and loving it.

## No Spin Here Award

**JEFF RUTHERFORD AND HIS  
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM**  
LESCO, CLEVELAND, OHIO



Jeff Rutherford came right out and said that LESCO had screwed up. And in this World-Com world of crooks, cooked books and blame storming over business deals gone wrong, Rutherford's admission that LESCO made a mistake by dissolving the company's direct sales force and increasing its mobile Stores On Wheels units in hope of maximizing operating profit percentage was admirable.

Rutherford could have consulted with the image consultants to put some kind of spin on the matter to soften LESCO's culpability when the company announced in July that it expected to lose net \$4 million in 2006.

But Rutherford didn't. He admitted that LESCO messed up. He also didn't throw former CEO Michael DiMino, whose decision it was to cut the sales force, under the bus.

Rutherford said LESCO was going back to its old way of doing business and rehiring the sales reps to try to right the ship. In doing so, Rutherford acknowledged that superintendents and LESCO's other customers missed the one-on-one interaction that the company's sales representatives provided.

"Our customers appreciated the time and attention the sales reps paid to them and to their turf-care needs," Rutherford said. "Our customers want us to bring back the sales reps, and that's what we're going to do."

Who knows how long it could take for LESCO to right itself. But give Rutherford credit for taking a forthright approach to the problem at hand.

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### One for All, All for One Award

**DAVE CATALANO**

DIRECTOR

BETHPAGE STATE PARK,  
FARMINGDALE, N.Y.



Bethpage is a beehive for golfers, about 50,000 of them a year. Dave Catalano, who has spent most of his career there, sees all types of golfers at Bethpage, which features five municipal courses, including the famed Black course.

"Kids, old people, men, women, black, white, Asian. You name it," Catalano said.

Catalano has seen enough golfers pass through Bethpage to realize that no golfer should be discriminated against playing on his course or any other facility. While that's not the case, unfortunately, Catalano continues to shoot down stereotypes that some golfers, including women, children and the disabled, play slowly and poorly.

"I don't know if there's any correlating evidence anywhere to support any of this nonsense," he says.

One time, when an old man disapproved of a junior tournament going on at Bethpage ("These kids have 50 more years to play golf. I'm an old man and I only have a few years," he groused), Catalano politely told him to take a hike.

"My response to him was, 'Have a nice day.' It wasn't a point we were going to debate," Catalano says.

More course personnel should pay heed to Catalano's approach and welcome all golfers with open arms. They should also educate their repeat customers that slow play doesn't necessarily equate to certain categories of people.

"You have slow play because golfers play slow," Catalano says. "They don't abide by any of the sensible practices that have been recommended for years on how to encourage fast play."

That said, there are golfers who play poorly but get around quickly, Catalano noted.

"I happen to be one of them," he said.

### The Just Let Girls Play Golf and Have Fun Award

**DAN LEJEUNE**

OWNER AND CEO

RIVERCREST GOLF CLUB & PRESERVE, OAKS, PA.



Don't ever accuse Dan Lejeune of being part of golf's good ol' boy network. Lejeune is a man on a mission to get more women to play golf. Hey, women just want to play the game and have fun like their male counterparts. Is there something wrong with that?

Lejeune, who has been a real-estate developer for more than 35 years, built RiverCrest specifically to attract women to play. While the club honors the traditional country club atmosphere that attracts men, Lejeune says the club recognizes the importance of offering an inviting atmosphere to women, including three sets of tees for women, equal membership status and daily play with no restrictions.

Lejeune says he witnessed women at other private clubs being treated unfairly by men. Appalled, he decided to do something about it. Women and men are happy he did.

"I can't tell you how many male members have come up to me and said, 'Dan, my wife and I are playing golf together and we're having a marvelous time,'" Lejeune says.

You go, guy.

### Good Sports Award

**STEVE JONES AND RON DOBOSZ**

SUPERINTENDENTS

GREENVILLE COUNTRY CLUB, GREENVILLE, S.C.  
AND LUDLOW COUNTRY CLUB, LUDLOW, MASS.



There was no trash talking. There was no yelling "MISS IT!" when each other putted. This wasn't Noonan and Denunzio going at it.

Even though superintendents Steve Jones and Ron Dobosz were playing for \$10,000 cash and \$10,000 worth of products from BASF for their respective golf courses and bragging rights, they weren't going to let anything spoil this splendid walk in the park — a round of golf on Pinehurst No. 8 in the Superintendent's Cup held during the 2006 BASF People vs. the Pros tournament in Pinehurst, N.C.

The 54-year-old Jones and the 35-year-old Dobosz squared off on a muggy and buggy late-August day. Their collective game plan? "We just wanted to go out and have some fun," Jones said.

Jones, who received nine strokes from Dobosz in the match-play event, won the Cup, 10 grand in cash and turf products. Dobosz won \$5,000.

But what showed most on the course, even more than some of Jones' booming drives, was the camaraderie the pair displayed as partners.

"We just loosened each other up," Jones said. "I wanted to beat him, and he wanted to beat me, but it's not a big deal. This isn't a cut-throat business."

Jones' and Dobosz's good sportsmanship reflects superintendents' respect for each as peers.



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**Count on it.**



We love listening to what others have to say. Here are some of the more notable things we heard from industry people and others in the past year.

# Worth Repeating

**"For a good golf course, you need drainage and common sense. If you're short on the latter, get more of the former."**

— Paul Rieke, professor emeritus of crop and soil science at Michigan State University.

**"I can call you farmers, is that correct?"**

— Rulon Gardner, the two-time Olympic medalist heavyweight wrestler, addressing the crowd of superintendents at the outset of his keynote speech at the Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show last December.

**"Believe me, I lose a lot of sleep thinking about the health of our show because it's our No. 1 asset and drives so much of what we do here."**

— Steve Mona, CEO of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, on the economic significance of the Golf Industry Show to the association.

**"People think in terms of the instant mature look. We're in an era of instant gratification."**

— Golf course architect Bill Coore on golfers wanting a great golf course NOW.

**"It's always something new and challenging. It's never dull."**

— Mark Langner, director of agronomy and applied research at FarmLinks Golf Club, the research and demonstration golf course owned by Pursell Technologies in Sylacauga, Ala. Langner's course is a guinea pig for new products.

**"2005 was the toughest golf season I have experienced in 23 years as a superintendent. If 2006 resembles this season, I will consider a career change."**

— Paul Diegnau, certified superintendent, Keller Golf Course, St. Paul, Minn., on what it takes to be a superintendent these days. We plan to check back with Paul to talk about 2006.

**"Those who attempt the ridiculous can achieve the impossible."**

— Col. John Blashford-Snell, the British adventurer and veteran expeditioner who was the keynote speaker at the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association's annual conference in January.

**"It was one of the worst-kept secrets in the history of secrets."**

— David Pursell, CEO of Pursell Technologies Inc., on the long-rumored sale of his family-owned company to Agrium Inc.

**"I've seen the after pictures of Hiroshima. That's what this looks like."**

— Peter Carew, long-time New Orleans golf course superintendent, while driving through the destroyed and desolated neighborhoods of his city seven months after Hurricane Katrina struck.

**"We're going to lose our ash."**

— Dave Shetlar, professor of entomology at The Ohio State University, on the threat posed by the Emerald Ash Borer, an exotic beetle that's killing ash trees in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

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