

# Month

## Hole Stats

Distance: 462 yards

Par 4

## The Turf

Greens: L-93 bentgrass

Fairways: L-93 bentgrass

EVOKING IMAGES OF GOLF'S SCOTTISH ORIGINS while working within the environmental confines of this Minnesota river area, Weed Design, known for creating courses that offer strategic choices reflective of both golf's traditions and today's modern game, created StoneRidge Golf Club's 7,000-yard, par-72 course as a "heathland" course. Open, sandy, treeless and featuring native grasses, StoneRidge takes advantage of its natural, environmentally friendly surrounding while offering challenging play.



The course's 462-yard, par-four fifth hole, known as "Plateau," epitomizes the heathland design.

Its elevated tee box, numerous natural sand bunkers, native grasses and varying fairway elevation challenge the golfers who play the course as well as StoneRidge superintendent Hugh Lynch and his crew who care for it. With 27,000

rounds played in a seven-month season, keeping "Plateau" and StoneRidge's other heathland holes in peak condition requires passionate dedication and attention to detail that makes playing a course of this style both interesting and challenging.

When leaf spot invaded the course's bentgrass fairways, Lynch incorporated broad-spectrum Insignia fungicide into his late-spring and early-fall fungicide program to successfully keep leaf spot and other diseases in check.

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GOLFDOM'S HOLE OF THE MONTH IS MADE POSSIBLE BY:

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**I**t's been a busy spring here at Lake Omigosh Country Club. In the 19th Hole Grille & Whine Bar, incoming Green Chairman Bert Warnecke is downing his second Long Island iced tea in less than 30 minutes. His head is shaking back and forth and he is mumbling to himself. Outgoing chairman Mel Crowder walks up to him and says: "My God, Bert you look terrible. Are you all right?"

Bert replies wearily, "Mel, what have I gotten myself into? I don't want Duffy to think I don't know anything about agronomy and turfgrass." (Duffy McDuffy is the superintendent. He's been at Lake Omigosh for seven years.)

Mel laughs and says: "Bert, he already knows you don't know anything about growing grass. He's wondering if you are coming in with an agenda or an open mind. Your real job is to keep the members from sabotaging the golf course with unrealistic demands. You need to watch Duffy's back and take a bullet for him when someone goes off half-cocked."

Bert frowns. "That doesn't sound like much fun," he says. "When Artie Blodgett (Club President Artemus Blodgett, U.S. Army, retired) recruited me for the chairmanship, he asked me if I would serve, and I told him then I didn't know anything about agronomy. He said, 'That's the beauty of it. You don't need to know anything about turfgrass; you just have to tell the superintendent what to do!'

"I've seen golf courses on TV, so I know what our course is supposed to look like, and thanks to Johnny Miller I know all about grain. But what you're saying is a real downer. I mean, I've already got a list of memorial trees I want to plant next to the ninth and 18th greens. There's one for my dad, Earl, who helped found this club and my dog, Fred, who was my best buddy."

Mel puts a hand on Bert's shoulder, looks him square in the eyes and says, "Bert, I'm going to the United States Golf Association's Web site to make you a copy of 'Ten Common Mistakes Made by Green Committees' because you have already mentioned two or

## Confessions from the 19th Hole

BY JOEL JACKSON



**'THAT'S THE BEAUTY  
OF IT. YOU DON'T  
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YOU JUST HAVE  
TO TELL THE  
SUPERINTENDENT  
WHAT TO DO!'**

three of them, and you haven't even been to your first aerification. I also had a steep learning curve when I took over as chairman. But Duffy has worked hard to give us a great golf course, and I don't want you screwing it up out of ignorance."

And then Mel tells Bert a story.

"Over at the new Kwitchyerbellyakin Golf Club, the green chairman told the superintendent he wanted fast greens," Mel says. "The superintendent said the greens were too immature, but he was forced to cut them down. The next month the chairman said he wanted faster greens. The superintendent said the late-summer growing conditions were stressing the greens. But the chairman reiterated, faster or else. The next month the chairman got into a bragging contest with another course, and he told the superintendent he wanted the fastest greens in the county. He took his own daily Stimpmeter readings to make sure the superintendent complied. The next month they lost six of the greens."

Bert said, "Wow! Did the green chairman resign or did the board of directors kick him off the committee?"

"Neither," Mel said. "They fired the superintendent. Bert, don't ever be like that jerk. Listen, learn and ask questions. Earn the superintendent's trust and there is no end to what he will do to give you the best golf course possible."

So long from Lake Omigosh, where the superintendent is dedicated, the crew is hard-working and the members are about par for the course.

---

*Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.*



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# **RHAPSODY®**





**F**or a sport played and controlled by so many self-described, lean-living, old-fashioned conservatives, it is amazing how many have been infatuated with ostentatious maintenance values and over-the-top design.

Even more amazing is that for all of the talk that Hollywood is nothing more than a swampland of monumental egos and bloated budgets, nothing used to excite many of golf's old-school types like a big-name celebrity designer and a swollen construction tab.

"They got (fill in big name) and he spent \$35 million!" they'll say with a gleam in their eyes.

But thanks to the more accepted view of golf architecture's "minimalist" movement, more sensible values are returning to the game.

Those tightwads in love with the big names and big budgets? Why, they are even helping to spearhead golf's move back to more sensible values. While a fringe element continues to celebrate the latest, biggest, gaudiest and most expensive course to come down the pike, the majority of golfers from all backgrounds are embracing the minimalist design movement.

What turned the tide? When some began to realize that minimalism in golf actually means maximalism.

Minimalism is the art of maximizing what the Big Guy upstairs bequeathed to us. From the tiniest natural bump to the native grasses thriving on the worst soil, the minimalist looks for ways to maximize his canvas to provide a rewarding, sensible golf experience.

And that's why the minimalist movement of low-profile, old-style and rugged-looking golf courses will always have a place, even as financiers line up to loan millions for the next Donald J. Trump Signature Design (yes, The Donald is now an architect).

While some golfers still view the minimalists as a bunch of VW van-driving tree huggers who don't bathe (they clearly haven't spent time around a certain famous architect), the success of Bandon Dunes and other minimalist designs has convinced even the most materialistic that great golf isn't necessarily the most expensive to build or the most perfectly manicured.

## Minimalism /s Maximalism

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



MINIMALISM IS  
THE ART OF  
MAXIMIZING WHAT  
THE BIG GUY  
UPSTAIRS  
BEQUEATHED TO US

A growing legion of golfers love design features that are found and saved during construction, and they appreciate the use of existing plant material to create a natural look that enhances beauty, saves money and preserves wildlife habitats.

Committees are embracing native trees at the suggestion of these minimalists while superintendents — longtime "maximalists" themselves who have always been willing to solve problems with their own site-specific remedies — have clearly been inspired by the movement.

Just consider how far the "look" of the bunker has come in the last 10 years. In an industry where once superintendents and committees believed a successful bunker was manicured and clean, the rough-edged, ragged and imposing look often advocated by minimalists has become a transformation tool for a course looking to go from mundane to lively.

In the not-so-distant past, the refrain was always the same: Those rugged bunkers are too much maintenance. Yet those fringy, thick-lipped pits have become accepted thanks in part to innovative superintendents who embraced the maximalist concept and developed their own creative maintenance solutions.

Not only has this trend delivered a more inspired and timeless look to courses, it has quietly introduced maximalist concepts to many course maintenance programs.

Whether golfers will ever give up their love of green grass, white bunkers and Augusta blue ponds is another story. But if the recent embrace of minimalist values is any indication, we're going to be hearing a lot about "fast and firm and lean."

Because there is no better way to maximize the design value of your course.

*Geoff Shackelford can be reached at [geoffshac@aol.com](mailto:geoffshac@aol.com).*



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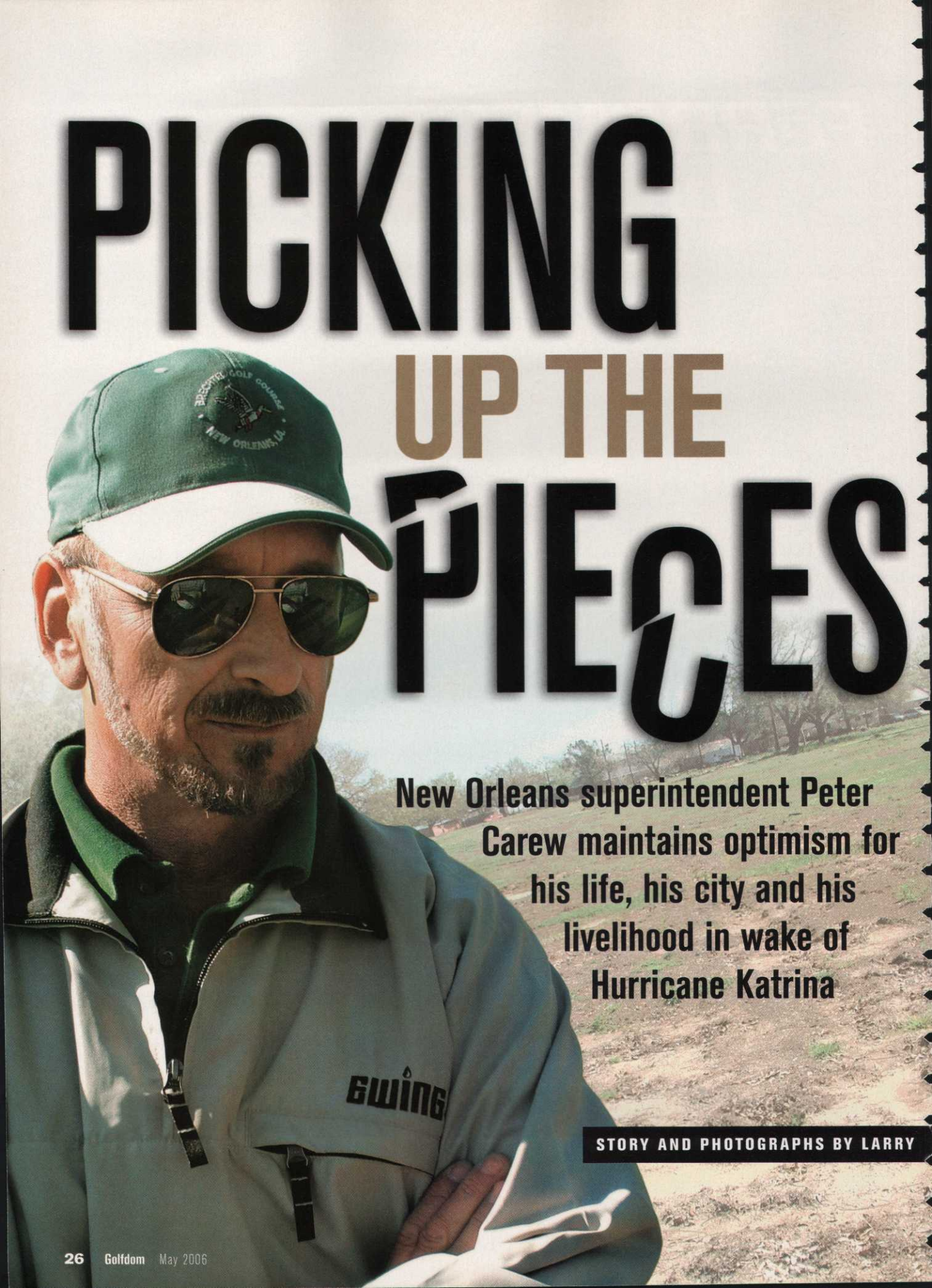


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# PICKING UP THE PIECES

**New Orleans superintendent Peter Carew maintains optimism for his life, his city and his livelihood in wake of Hurricane Katrina**

**STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY LARRY**



## THE PUTTING GREENS WEREN'T GREEN.

They were brown, as in dirt brown. The fairways and tees were brown, too, and comprised of more thatch than grass.

Still, the golfers came to play the Brechtel Memorial Park Municipal Golf Course in New Orleans. They came because they had to forget about their troubled lives, even if just for a few hours.

The golf course provided a sanctuary of sorts for the people, many whose lives had been shattered by the harrowing hurricane known as Katrina, which had struck only three months before.

Peter Carew, the long-time superintendent of the course, knew the anguished people needed a place like Brechtel to escape to. Some of the people had lost so much — their homes, possessions and jobs — that they had to go somewhere they could smile, even laugh, and forget about what had happened to them.

So Carew's quest was to get Brechtel, which had suffered flood and wind damage at the hurricane's wrath, back in operation as soon as possible.

In Carew's mind, it was simply a matter of providing peace of mind to people consumed with heartache. Carew asked himself: What pleasure can there be had in a human life if it only consists of a wrecked home to repair and a bar seat to slide into so one can drown his sorrows?

So on Dec. 1, about three months after Katrina had struck, Brechtel reopened. It didn't take long for the course's pebble-filled parking lot to become crowded with cars belonging to people from all walks of life. And they played the course's dirt-brown greens. And do you know what? Nobody complained — not one person.

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

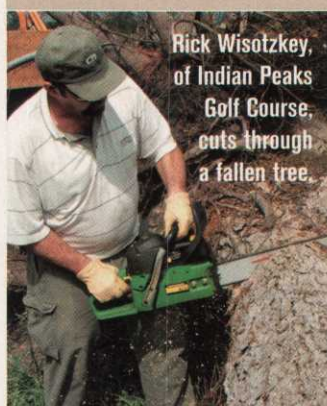
Carew shakes his head and chuckles. He

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# HELPING HANDS

By Larry Aylward  
Editor in Chief

They came, they worked and they left four New Orleans golf courses in much better condition than they had found them



Mission accomplished.

On March 19, Colorado golf course superintendent Steve Sarro and 29 of his industry counterparts returned from a road trip to New Orleans to work on four golf courses damaged by Hurricane Katrina last summer. The volunteers weren't sure what to expect when they arrived in the Big Easy for duty. But when their week-long trip was over, the volunteers earned a big thumbs up from the superintendents at the golf courses on the receiving end of their assistance.

"What we did may have seemed small in the beginning, but we left one hell of an impression down there," said Sarro, the 28-year-old superintendent of the Vail (Colo.) Golf Club who organized the effort.

On March 11, Sarro and his assembly, including several superintendents and turf students, left Colorado Springs in a caravan of vans and headed to New Orleans. They arrived on March 12 and went to work the following Monday morning at four courses: 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 before leaving on the trip. "I've always heard that your time means more than your money."

The New Orleans courses' superintendents welcomed the volunteers with open arms — and with chores they had been putting off for months because they didn't have enough staff to complete them.

Matt Yount, the superintendent at English Turn, told the volunteers, "It's just an awesome thing to have all you guys take time out of your lives to come down here and help us."

"The opportunity to have them come in and give us a hand with some things that we haven't been able to get to has been a big help,"

*Continued on page 34*

AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF



This fairway at the Joe Bartholomew Golf Club, which was underwater for six weeks, hardly resembles what it once was.

### SHUT DOWN

Effect of Hurricane Katrina on golf facilities in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

Closed	Number	Percent
1-3 days	56	31
4 days - 1 week	36	20
2-3 weeks	43	24
4-6 weeks	11	6
2-3 months	8	4
4 months	6	3
Never closed	2	1
Still closed	18	10

SOURCE: NATIONAL GOLF FOUNDATION TELEPHONE SURVEY

**"IT WAS NOTHING  
BUT DEATH – DEAD  
TREES, DEAD GRASS,  
DEAD EVERYTHING.  
AND THE SMELL  
WOULD JUST KNOCK  
YOU OUT OF YOUR  
SOCKS."**

PETER CAREW

*Continued from page 27*

knows the people recognized he did his best to whip the tattered course into halfway-decent shape, and he appreciates them for understanding his arduous plight.

It's spring now, and Brechtel continues to garner steady play. In fact, the course is far ahead in revenues for the first three months of this year when compared to 2005.

"The place is packed every day," says Carew, noting a reason for the increased business is that golfers have few other places to play. "People keep asking me, 'You're not going to shut down, are you?'"

The golf course looks much better, too. The bermudagrass greens are popping, thanks to the warm weather. Yellow iris flowers around a pond are blooming.

It's a wonder that Carew and the diminished Brechtel staff were able to get the course open at all, let alone filled with golfers, so quickly.

"People thought it would be two years before you would see any life out here," Carew says. "It was phenomenal what we did."

Ann E. Macdonald, director of the

department of parks and parkways for the City of New Orleans and Carew's superior, says Carew was "adamant" about getting the course reopened. She says his determination to do so was a major reason why the city was able to reopen it so quickly.

"We are so proud of the work that he and the others have done," she says. "[Carew] is so passionate about the course."

Carew, who has worked for the city for about 21 years, wants to do more. He would like to reopen the other city golf course he manages, the Joe Bartholomew Golf Club, but he knows he might not get the chance. Bartholomew was destroyed and will cost millions to repair.

Like so many residents, the 52-year-old Carew is trying to regain a sense of normalcy in his life since the hurricane. Carew admits it has been easier for him than others. He didn't lose his house to the hurricane, although it was damaged. He also still has his job.

Carew, his wife and two children left New Orleans on Aug. 28 when the storm was bearing down on the city. They traveled to Natchitoches, La., in the northwest part of the state, where they stayed for about seven weeks. They spent four of those weeks sleeping on the gym floor at Northwestern State University, which was transformed into a Red Cross shelter.

About a week after Katrina hit, Carew left Natchitoches and went back to New Orleans to check on his house and help a friend in need. Carew discovered that looters had tried to break into his home. Fortunately, the plywood that Carew had nailed to his home's windows and doors had thwarted the thieves.

Carew spent two nights in his house before returning to Natchitoches to be with his family. With the looters still lurking and gunfire in the air, Carew went to sleep with a .357 Magnum resting on his chest.

Carew, who was born and raised in Connecticut but has lived in New Orleans for 30 years, was anxious to return to work when he and his family returned to New Orleans in late October. When he did get back to work, it wasn't at the golf course, however. Carew was placed in charge of a cleanup crew, which removed trash and debris from elevated areas

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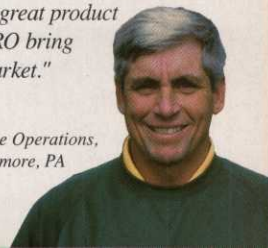
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## Picking Up the Pieces

*Continued from page 28*

where evacuees had been living when the city was underwater. But Macdonald soon had Carew transferred back to Brechtel and challenged him to get the golf course back in operation.

When Carew returned to Brechtel, he didn't recognize it. The clubhouse looked like King Kong had torn it apart. The grass had grown to nearly 5 feet tall throughout the course, and hundreds of trees were either uprooted or snapped like toothpicks at their trunks.

The chain-link fence surrounding the 100-acre course was flattened. A good portion of it was in the street and getting run over by traffic.

Brechtel had been submerged in about 4 feet of water for two weeks. If there's a silver lining, it's that the course was flooded by freshwater, not the more corrosive saltwater.

Brechtel's PGA golf pro, Fred Frederickson, who was born and raised in New Orleans and has worked at the course for 27 years, also returned for work. Frederickson told Carew that he would help him any way he could to get the course open.

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

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

Brechtel normally has a crew of nine, but only one worker from that crew returned. That employee, Raymond Joseph, has worked with Carew for 18 years. "I wanted to come back," says the 57-year-old Joseph. "It's just so pleasant to work here."

Two other city employees from different departments were reassigned to work at Brechtel. The men, Roderrick Rick and Bill Elliott, were placed in charge of raising and repairing the fence. During a lunch break recently, the

two sat outside Brechtel's clubhouse and discussed the massive undertaking.

"We've accomplished a lot, but there's still a lot that needs to be done," says the 59-year-old Rick, formerly with the city's tree department. Rick, who lived in the hard-hit Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, lost his home and most all of his possessions. He currently lives in a trailer on his brother's property.

The 55-year-old Elliott has been a city employee for 37 years. "They said it couldn't be done... the way that fence looked," Elliott says. "But we love a challenge."

"It has been a phenomenal effort," Carew says of their work. "I take my hat off to them."

Carew says he has little money to spend on course maintenance. Not surprisingly, his maintenance budget was cut, as were those of many of the city's departments because New Orleans is so low on money.

But with 30 years in the business at courses with moderate to low budgets, Carew has learned to be a resourceful

superintendent. As he says, he's learned how to make something out of nothing.

Upon returning to the course, Carew and his small crew got to work cleaning it up. First, all of the downed trees and debris were removed. Then the towering grass was cut. Carew used a Bush Hog mower, known for its toughness, to mow the turf. He used a back hoe with claw teeth to pick up the piles of thatch left behind.

While flooding damaged much of Brechtel's maintenance equipment, some industry companies have come to the course's aid with donations. The Toro Co. donated a utility vehicle, and Syngenta Professional Products gave a supply of herbicide.

The course is still without irrigation, and Carew has been trying to get an electrician out to repair it. But the electricians in the area have more important projects to do. "I tried to entice one guy out here by giving him a free round of golf," Carew jokes.

Despite his ingenuity, Carew doesn't hide the fact that he needs more money to keep the course going. He's concerned about the course's health, especially the greens, if the irrigation system isn't repaired soon.

As the crow flies, Brechtel and the Joe Bartholomew Golf Club are about five miles apart and on opposite sides of the Mississippi River. Despite their close proximity, the courses sustained contrasting damage, especially in terms of flooding.

Bartholomew, located on the river's east side, was wiped out. It was submerged in water for about six weeks, 15 feet to 20 feet deep in some areas.

What the course revealed after the water receded was a dreadful sight. Dead sharks and other fish were strewn throughout the property. The fish funneled onto the course when a brackish-water lake nearby overflowed after being flooded from a nearby broken canal levee.

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**"THIS IS MY BREAD AND BUTTER. IF THE COURSE ISN'T OPEN, I DON'T MAKE ANY MONEY. I HAVE A FAMILY TO FEED."**

**FRED FREDERICKSON,**  
PGA GOLF PRO, BRECHTEL  
GOLF COURSE

