



For the sixth straight year, **LebanonTurf** will host the annual Dog of the Year contest at the Golf Industry Show in New Orleans, Feb. 5 - 7, 2009. One of these precious pups will be crowned the 2009 Dog of the Year. The winning dog earns a prize of a \$3,000 donation to its superintendent's local chapter and a cash reward of \$500.00. Come to **LebanonTurf's Booth #2929** in New Orleans and cast your ballot for your favorite Dog Days of Golf contestant. Photographs and a description of each dog's personality will be on display.

Continued from page 19

get tired of him? The answer is simple: It was just a matter of being honest, kind and respectful to everyone, Voykin says. Of course, Voykin also had to be a very capable superintendent to last so long.

Here's to his perseverance and a happy retirement.

The "Boss of the Year" Award

MARY LOU FERRIER

CO-OWNER

WASHAKIE GOLF & RV RESORT

Mary Lou Ferrier is boss of all of the employees at Washakie Golf & RV Resort in North Branch, Mich. And the 80-year-old Ferrier, who operates Washakie with her son Brian, takes good care of her workers.

Every day, just as the clock strikes noon, Mary Lou feeds the Washakie work crew a hearty, home-cooked lunch. She can be seen daily darting around the kitchen of her home, located a short distance from the golf course, readying the



midday meal. One by one, the hungry workers file in the door of Mary Lou's small home and take their seats at the 6-foot-

long dining table adorned with a plastic, floral tablecloth. Mary Lou serves them the plates, and the employees dig in.

"I enjoy having them over," says Mary Lou, who has been cooking lunch for the staff since Washakie, located about 60 miles north of Detroit, opened 35 years ago. "I like listening to them yak. Otherwise, I wouldn't know what's going on around here."

It's a nice fringe benefit for the employees, who consist of the golf course superintendent and his four-man crew, and four women who work in the course's pro shop. But it's more than just a homemade meal for them. It's the

chance for the Washakie staff to convene and talk shop for an hour.

The crew does not take Mary Lou's free home-cooked daily meals for granted. They know they'd probably be eating something made fast and greasy if it wasn't for her.

Mary Lou knows there's nothing like a home-cooked meal to keep employees happy and working hard.

The "All in the Family" Award

FRANK GORE

RETIRED EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
CLUBCORP

Myriad task forces, think tanks and even formal entities have been devising marketing initiatives and ad



campaigns to grow the game of golf, but the really big changes — like shaking the game of its traditional six-hour obligation — has been largely academic with the exception of a few golf courses.

Thus far, the industry has responded to America's virtual time poverty by building longer, tougher golf courses, which largely have cannibalized shorter, easier layouts. That trend has hampered rounds at public facilities. And private clubs are experiencing a shakeout, too. Fewer traditional country club members are willing to forgo weekends with family to golf as often as they did in the past.

That's a point that Frank Gore understands. Gore was ClubCorp's executive vice president of membership and sales until he retired from the company this year. But before he did, he shared this anecdote with *Golfdom*:

"My father was an avid golfer. I can't imagine the amount of laughter that would have taken place if I asked him to give up his weekend golf to watch me play soccer," he says. "Conversely, my daughter played soccer for six years without ever

scoring a goal, but I never missed a game. It's different now, and we saw a lot of this prioritizing of what's important after 9/11."

In response to the demand for more family recreation time and fewer hours on the golf course, more than 90 of ClubCorp's managed properties began offering a new set of forward tees last spring.

The company's FasTee Course places teeing grounds about 100 yards closer to the green than the previous forward tees, allowing dads to play in about an hour after work and still attend evening obligations or letting kids play along with their dads without holding up play.

The innovation isn't new, but kudos to Gore and other ClubCorp executives for creating a companywide mandate. These initiatives won't succeed without buy-in from the highest levels.

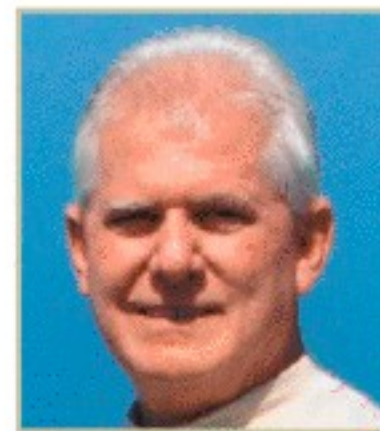
The "I Won't Back Down" Award

MARK WOODWARD

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
GCSAA

What if you worked at a public golf course that was so revered by its community that golfers threatened to kill you if you restricted their access or depreciated its conditions?

It happened to Mark Woodward, the new CEO of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Earlier this year, he hosted the U.S. Open at Torrey Pines, where he spent three years prepping for the national championship as the club's director of golf operations.



When he first arrived at the San Diego treasure, he suggested the city should raise user fees to reflect the quality of the venue. San Diego residents can play the championship layouts for less than \$50.

Once Woodward's proposal hit the local media, an avid golfer told him: "If I had a

gun, I'd shoot you right now." And his wife was told via e-mail that the community was going to run them out of town.

But Woodward didn't flinch. "I never took it personally. They were just trying to protect their access to their golf course," he says. "People who come here have a certain reverence about it. You just know it's special. When you stand on the clubhouse deck and look out over the ocean, it's almost a spiritual experience."

Woodward never cowered. He championed his business plan in the local media and among the loyal municipal golfers, and he not only turned around Torrey Pines' conditioning, he cut the deficit at historic Balboa Park Golf Course in half.

Balboa, also a William P. Bell design like Torrey Pines, was losing almost \$1 million a year when Woodward arrived, primarily because user fees were too low to sustain operations. He implemented new fee structures, and he says the deficit will drop even more once the facility installs a new irrigation system and makes other planned upgrades.

If Woodward shows the same fortitude leading the GCSAA, then superintendents should be in good hands.

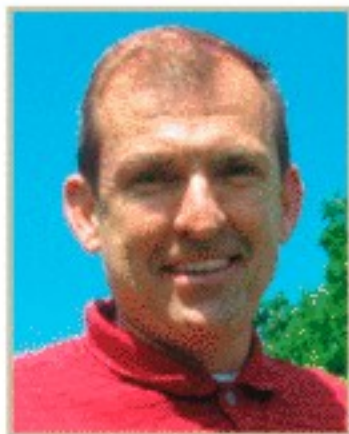
The "It's Not About Me" Award

STEVE COOK

GOLF COURSE MANAGER/CERTIFIED SUPERINTENDENT
OAKLAND HILLS COUNTRY CLUB

His employees rave about him. They say they couldn't have a better boss than Steve Cook, the golf course manager of Oakland Hills Country Club, site of this year's PGA Championship.

"Ninety-eight percent of the things I do here on a daily basis come from what Steve Cook taught me when I was there," says Jeff Frentz, the certified superintendent of Lake Shore Country Club in



Glencoe, Ill., who worked for eight years under Cook at Oakland Hills. "I couldn't have had a better mentor."

Cook oversees golf maintenance at one of the top clubs in the country. But you won't catch him bragging. Cook didn't set out to be a star superintendent at a headline club. His chief goal is to be a solid mentor to those who work for him.

Cook doesn't take a my-way-or-the-highway approach. Benjamin McGargill, superintendent of the Oakland Hills' South Course, says Cook empowers him and other staff members to do their jobs.

"He lets us do our thing," McGargill says. "He gives us the reins." There are times, Cook admits, when somebody is doing a job one way that he would rather see done another way. But Cook keeps his mouth shut because he has learned that his way is not always the best way.

"I don't have all the answers, and I'm not ashamed to admit that," he says.

Cook's it's-not-about-me approach is refreshing, indeed.

The "Be As You Are" Award

BILL MURRAY

GREENKEEPER

DOUBLE EAGLE GOLF CLUB

He was born into this world as Bill Murray. He just so happens to look like — you guessed it — the actor Bill Murray. And he makes his livelihood in the golf course maintenance industry, just like the actor Murray's character Carl Spackler did in "Caddyshack."

This Bill Murray is 43 years old and a member of superintendent Todd Voss' maintenance crew at the Double Eagle Club in Galena, Ohio. It's a coincidence that Murray ended up with the actor Murray's name, who helped put the profession of golf course maintenance on the map in the 1980 film when he was cast as the oddball assistant golf course

superintendent who toked on turf, lived like a slob and displayed a combative side, at least when it came to gophers.



It would be understandable if Double Eagle's Murray distanced himself from Murray's "Caddyshack" character and demanded to be called "William." But Murray not only rolls with the situation, he has a blast with it. "I've had a lot of fun kidding around with it," he says.

He has the goofy Spackler facial looks from "Caddyshack" down to a science. He knows the movie's lines like the back roads home to his house. "My enemy, my foe, is an animal," Murray might mutter to a co-worker. "In order to conquer the animal, I have to learn to think like an animal. And, whenever possible, to look like one. I've gotta get inside this guy's pelt and crawl around for a few days."

In a previous job as a bartender, Murray dressed up as the Spackler character. "I bought a hat, let my beard grow for three days, put some dirt on face and dressed in a raggedy-old T-shirt and some Army fatigues," he says.

One time in the bar, a customer told Murray that he looked like the actor. When Murray told the customer that Bill Murray was his name, the guy said he would give him a 50 percent tip on his \$120 bill if he could prove it. Murray showed him his driver's license and was \$60 richer.

One thing is for sure: Voss doesn't have to worry about Murray going off on gophers at Double Eagle. Murray, who has worked on the crew for about two seasons, is a reliable and capable worker.

"I love having him on the crew because he has seen it all and enjoys all the work on the course," Voss says. "He never complains and works seven days a week."

Voss says he wouldn't be surprised if Murray became a superintendent some day. "Now wouldn't that be ironic," Voss says.

Maybe Murray was born for it. ■



Thanks in part to Tiger Woods, the U.S. Open at Torrey Pines was the year's most memorable Major and, perhaps, golfing event.

What a Wild Year

It was exciting, transformational, controversial, wacky and — like everything else — affected by the slow economy

STORY/PHOTOS BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

It was the best of times and ... well ... you know. That economic collapse thing sure put a damper on an epic, even transformational year in golf.

Epic because the potential for golf to thrill and inspire became apparent again, just when you thought we were doomed by technology and dull championships. Transformational because the world saw just how magical of a setting that a properly configured golf course can be.

Sure, there were a few salty stories and plenty of signs that the game was in for a big hurt when the economy slowed down, such as a dip in rounds and golf course construction. But the indelible image of 2008 and beyond arrived with Tiger Woods' epic U.S. Open win at Torrey Pines in San Diego. And while he did the heavy lifting — holding off the feisty Rocco Mediate in an unforgettable playoff watched by enormous audiences — equal credit goes to humble behind-the-scenes string-pulling by Torrey Pines' Certified Superintendent Mark Woodward and United States Golf Association's Senior Director of Rules and Competitions Mike Davis, who was in charge of setting up the course. Their work, and the sweat of hundreds of volunteers, produced the greatest week of golf since the 1986 Masters.

Before that epic week in June and a classic Ryder Cup win by America fueled almost entirely by shrewd golf course preparation, 2008 proved more bizarre than exciting. At the PGA of America's Economic Forum in January, we learned that golf course facilities make up a \$28 billion industry, making the business bigger (at least in the PGA's eyes) than the motion-picture industry, newspaper publishing and all other sports.

"Golf generates more money than any other sport in the world that we know of," said Steve Mona, executive director of the World Golf Foundation and former CEO of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Of course, no one really bought the numbers since they included wedding and banquet revenue and inflated real estate numbers.

That wasn't the only bizarre study, as researchers working off a \$193,000 grant from Allergan discovered the cure for the yips — Botox! That's the drug used for muscle cramping, Parkinson's disease and mostly for politicians and aging beauty queens to reduce skin wrinkles. The maker of Botox? Allergan!

The news wasn't all weird, though. At times, it was downright disastrous. In January, Golf Channel announcer Kelly Tilghman was yucking it up during the PGA Tour's

season-opening Mercedes Championship telecast with announce partner Nick Faldo when she suggested that Tiger's fellow tour players might want to lynch him in a back alley. The comment drew widespread condemnation from everyone on the planet, including President George Bush and just about every other American pundit dying for another three minutes in front of a microphone. Just when you thought the controversy was dying down, it tipped into absurdity when Golfweek Editor Dave Seanor ran an image of a noose on the weekly's cover. That brilliant decision turned out to be more of a black eye for the game than Tilghman's thoughtless but ultimately harmless comment.

"Clearly, what Kelly said was inappropriate and unfortunate, and she obviously regrets her choice of words," PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem said. "But we consider Golfweek's imagery of a swinging noose on its cover to be outrageous and irresponsible. It smacks of tabloid journalism. It was a naked attempt to inflame and keep alive an incident that was heading to an appropriate conclusion."

Seanor was quickly relieved of his duties and the game moved on. Slowly.

Yes, slow play made its annual appearance in stories about the PGA Tour and everyday game. In 2008, the talk turned a bit nastier, spurred on by Woods and other top players making public comments. And there was a five-hour round for Sunday twosomes at the Masters, but mostly widespread astonishment that the PGA Tour had not levied a two-shot penalty for slow play in 16 years.

However, the LPGA Tour made news by enforcing its policy on Angela Park at its Hawaii stop, providing bulletin-board fodder for golf courses across the land. Park finished only one stroke behind eventual winner Annika Sorenstam, but a triple-bogey seven at No. 10 gave her a final-round 69 — 209 and a tie for fifth that cost her \$60,000 (at least). Park's triple came after rules official Doug Brecht gave her a two-shot penalty for taking too long.

"I didn't think it was fair at all," Park told the media. She was the only one in her threesome to be penalized after being put on the clock at the 10th tee. "When he (rules official Doug Brecht) came up to me and penalized

me, I was like, you know where I am on this leaderboard? You have any idea?"

The LPGA earned rave reviews for making an issue of the embarrassing rituals that today's players make fans endure. Meanwhile, the world's best male players continued to make a mockery of the sport while setting a horrible example for younger players. In Europe, they've taken notice that this is, in large part, an American problem. The Irish Independent's Karl MacGinty was one of many noted Euro writers to vent about Sean O'Hair not being prepared to play when it was his turn down the stretch at Bay Hill.

"OK, O'Hair's not as mind-numbingly slow as JB Holmes, the mega-hitter from Kentucky," MacGinty wrote. "This guy is utterly infuriating. Holmes resembles a preying mantis painstakingly stalking its lunch as he goes through his staccato pre-shout routine."

Holmes salvaged some respect for his solid performance at September's epic Ryder Cup, where Paul Azinger made him one of four captain's picks. But it was Azinger's setup of Valhalla Golf Club that made the Ryder Cup so memorable. Carried out in close conjunction with superintendent Mark Wilson, Azinger expanded the course's intermediate rough cut from a standard 6 feet to as much as 60 feet, effectively eliminating the role of rough. The result? Some of the most thrilling, heroic and bold play the game has seen in ages. Both teams attributed the genius of play to

Continued on page 41

The USGA's Mike Davis emphasized mental examination over an excessively physical one in his setup at Torrey Pines.



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PART 2

About This Series

Welcome to Part Two of *Golfdom's* three-part “Water Wise” series, which aims to educate golf course superintendents and other industry personnel on the irrigation issues facing the golf course maintenance industry.

Today, more superintendents are feeling the pressure to reduce water use. And there's no doubt that even more superintendents will feel pressure to cut back on irrigation in coming years. That means superintendents are getting more keen on the equipment, products and services they can use to help them reduce water while maintaining healthy turfgrass for playability and aesthetics as part of a \$65 billion industry.

Part Two of this series is titled “Less Is More.” It goes on the premise that while most superintendents use water wisely, they can do more to be even better stewards. The story tells what creative things some superintendents are doing to reduce water usage.

Part One, titled “Getting Out the Word,” appeared in November and reported on what the golf industry needs to do to get out the message to golfers and non-golfers alike that it uses water wisely.

Part Three, “Golf Course Irrigation in 2025,” runs in January and will reveal what the future holds for golf course irrigation from environmental, technological and philosophical standpoints.

– Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

Less Is More

While most superintendents consider themselves responsible users of water, they realize they can do even more to be better stewards | [See page 30](#)

- ALSO:
- [We're Committed to Helping](#) | page 28
 - [Taking an Intelligent Approach](#) | page 29
 - [Undoing Overseeding](#) | page 35

We're Committed to Helping

By **Kathy Conard**

Superintendents across the country are exploring ways to reduce water use and use water more efficiently.

The current trends estimate that 36 states are anticipating water shortages by 2013 and there will be increased demand for water because of population growth (www.cia.gov).

Golf courses are being scrutinized more and more over water, fertilizer and pesticide use. Environmental groups have erroneously begun to target golf courses as an environmental menace.

Some areas are putting strict limitations on water use, as well as the amounts and types of chemicals that can be used. In some areas, regulators are keeping a close eye on fertilizer run-off. These limitations can lead to a huge problem: How can you maintain green, healthy, playable turfgrass without enough water? How can you avoid disease with limited chemical use and ensure that your turfgrass has the nutrients it needs? The answers to these problems may lie with soil surfactants.

Aquatrols, a company that leads the way in promoting and aiding water conservation and efficiency, is committed to helping turfgrass managers stretch their water resources and improve efficiencies of soil-directed products. Aquatrols soil surfactants provide an inexpensive way to maintain turfgrass health and ensure better-playing surfaces.

Water is nature's transport system for the delivery of all soil-directed fertilizers



and chemicals. When infiltration is interrupted, both water and soil-directed turfgrass management materials it carries will sit on the surface of the soil or will run off to non-target areas. This can negatively impact the performance of applied materi-

als, lead to lower-than-expected turfgrass quality and have a detrimental effect on

As golf course superintendents, Aquatrols understands you face difficult choices in relation to water conservation issues. It makes sense both financially and ecologically to use less water and do your part to protect a vital resource. Water is critical to your business and to the establishment and maintenance of uniform turfgrass. Our products can help you to conserve water supplies

“Golf courses are being scrutinized more and more over water, fertilizer and pesticide use. Environmental groups have erroneously begun to target golf courses as an environmental menace.”

the environment.

Surfactants increase infiltration and uniform penetration of irrigation or rainfall, making it more readily available for plant uptake. Because water is delivered more efficiently into the soil, turfgrass functions can be maintained with less water. In addition, less fertilizer and chemicals are lost to run-off or leaching and can be utilized more effectively to help you manage your turfgrass and resources more efficiently.

The result is increased turfgrass performance even under stressful conditions and better environmental stewardship at the same time. Superintendents will see more dependable plant growth and playability coursewide while utilizing an environmentally sound turfgrass management program.

while ensuring turf survival and, most importantly, help you to give golfers the playing conditions they demand.

Conard is Aquatrols' marketing manager for turf and ornamental. If you have questions or want more information on Aquatrols products or the Water Impact Alliance, contact www.aquatrols.com or call Conard at 800-257-7797.



Taking an Intelligent Approach

By Michael Roberts

Over the past 75 years, Rain Bird has developed a wide variety of products, services and technologies with a common goal — to irrigate golf courses, landscapes and crops in the most effective and efficient manner possible. While applying precise amounts of water with minimal waste is a common goal for most golf courses, there is more that can be done.

As a result, Rain Bird continues to support The Intelligent Use of Water™ through partnerships and educational initiatives designed to help golf courses and irrigation professionals become better stewards of this precious resource.

Rain Bird doesn't view The Intelligent Use of Water as just a slogan — we see it as a philosophy that touches every aspect



of our business. Bringing you this “Water Wise” series in collaboration with *Golfdom* is just one example of how Rain Bird partners with like-minded organizations to spotlight the need for responsible water use.

Rain Bird also educates diverse audiences about smart water use through white papers and global summits as well as elementary school programs that help teachers and students learn more about water's economic and ecological roles.

However, it's Rain Bird's deep-rooted commitment to innovative products and technologies that lies at the heart of The Intelligent Use of Water philosophy. We're dedicated to providing state-of-the-art systems and components that offer each golf course and landscape a fully integrated and customized irrigation solution.

For example, field and lab testing has shown that our EAGLE rotors can

“ Rain Bird doesn't use The Intelligent Use of Water as just a slogan — we see it as a philosophy that touches every aspect of our business.”

help golf courses use up to 23 percent less water than its nearest competitor through superior distribution uniformity. That's the commitment to innovation and performance that Rain Bird strives to offer with every product, every day and for every situation.

The bottom line? Water is our world's most precious resource, and we all need to use it wisely. However, no single individual, company or agency can do it alone. As you spend time reading the “Water Wise” series, consider how The Intelligent Use of Water applies to your life — at home, at work and within your community.

Michael Roberts is director of golf irrigation for Rain Bird. For more information on Rain Bird's products or The Intelligent Use of Water campaign, contact www.rainbird.com.

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PHOTO BY: MIKE KLEMME



Less Is More

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

He didn't have to do it, but Christopher S. Gray Sr. decided to implement a reclaimed water irrigation program at the Marvel Golf Club, where he is the general manager and golf course superintendent.

It's not that Gray's course doesn't have access to plenty of fresh water for irrigation. Marvel Golf Club, after all, is located in Benton, Ky., which is not exactly the arid Southwest. In fact, Gray's club could easily draw fresh water from a nearby lake.

But Gray believes that irrigating with reclaimed water — because he *can* irrigate with it — is the right thing to do.

"There's no reason I have to do it, but I do it because it's the most environmentally sensitive thing to do," Gray says.

Gray began the program about two

While most superintendents consider themselves responsible users of water, they realize they can do even more to be better stewards

years ago. It entails recapturing all storm water and household wastewater generated by the homes surrounding the golf course. It is then treated and pumped into the course's irrigation retention ponds where it is used to irrigate the course.

These days, with an impending freshwater crisis threatening to doom this nation and this planet, more superintendents like Gray realize they need to conserve fresh water. While most superintendents consider themselves to be responsible users of fresh water, they realize they can do even more to be better stewards.

Dara Park, assistant professor in the

department of horticulture at Clemson University, has watched this attitude build among superintendents in the South, who are studying alternative ways to reduce water use. Park says their thinking has been spurred by dry conditions the past few years throughout the South. "Most of them understand the implications," Park says.

But some superintendents, especially in the North, might have to be reminded more that they need to conserve water. While Rick Slattery, superintendent of the Locust Hill Golf Club in Fairport, N.Y., believes most superintendents are responsible irrigators, he says, "There's a lot of room for improvement."