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OUR WINDOW IS WIDER.™

Superintendent Peter Carew never gave up hope that the Joseph M. Bartholomew Golf Course – destroyed by Hurricane Katrina – would reopen one day.

TIME

Four years after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, a New Orleans golf course and its superintendent are feeling rejuvenated

BY LARRY AYLWARD,
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Heals

PETER CAREW was reluctant to go there. Seeing the place only distressed him. After all, it was a place Carew loved dearly — the place he worked for many years as a golf course superintendent. And now it was destroyed.

Hurricane Katrina, with its mighty fury, ravaged the place known as the Joseph M. Bartholomew Golf Course, located in New Orleans' hard-working Pontchartrain Park neighborhood. The municipal course, one of two Carew oversees as the city's superintendent, was submerged in water for about six weeks — 15 feet to 20 feet deep in places — after the largest natural disaster in U.S. history struck four years ago this month. What the course revealed after the water receded was a dreadful sight.

"It was nothing but death — dead trees, dead grass, dead everything," Carew says. "And the smell would just knock you out of your socks."

Bartholomew Golf Course was in the final stages of a \$1-million renovation when the hurricane hit, but the storm turned it into a wasteland that Carew didn't like to visit very often.

But time *does* heal.

On a recent cloudless day with an astonishingly blue sky, Carew returned to the course. This time, Carew has a spirit about him. This time, there's the smell of life in the air — literally, of the flora sprouting in the warm sunshine — and Carew's proverbial cup is overflowing with hope.



March 2006

Carew, dressed in blue jeans and a long-sleeve, dark-green shirt emblazoned with the city of New Orleans logo, scans the land in front of him, which soon will be the renovated first hole of the golf course. Carew, who also wears a black cap and pointed cowboy boots, wasn't sure he'd ever come to this place again and feel happy.

Bartholomew's renovation officially began last month with a ribbon cutting on July 4 with New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, who was one of the guests. The city plans to reopen the course in November 2010.

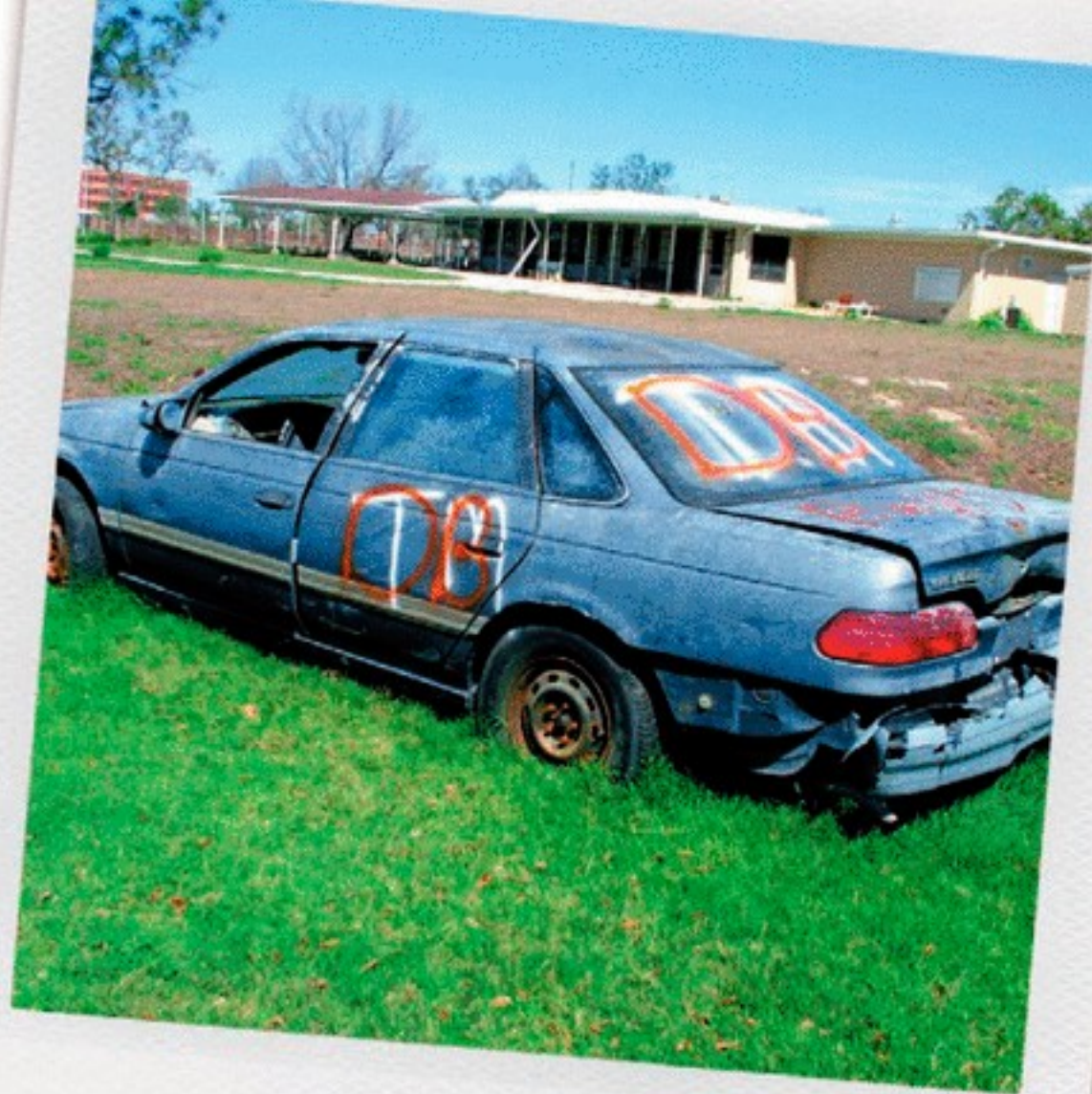
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Eight months after the hurricane, a fairway at Joe Bartholomew Golf Course hardly resembled what it once was.

Time Heals

(Right) A Ford Taurus was abandoned near Bartholomew's first tee during Hurricane Katrina.

(Bottom) Peter Carew shakes New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin's hand at the mayor's Christmas party. Nagin has made it a priority to reopen Bartholomew Golf Course.



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Originally opened as the Pontchartrain Golf Course in 1956, the facility was renamed to honor its architect, Joseph M. Bartholomew, one of the first blacks to design a golf course in the United States.

Truth is, despite the depth of his despair, Carew never gave up hope that someday the course would reopen. He just didn't think it would be so soon.

"Hopelessness is something superintendents usually don't feel," Carew says. "We're usually the last ones to give up. I refused to give up."

Carew's tenacity was a big reason he was able to open Brechtel Memorial Park Municipal Golf Course, the other city course he oversees, about three months after Katrina struck. Brechtel was battered and is still in disrepair, but it wasn't destroyed like Bartholomew. Carew wanted to get Brechtel, which had suffered flood and wind damage, reopened as soon as possible because

he knew the anguished people of New Orleans needed a place to go and forget about their troubles, even if just for a few hours. And when Brechtel opened, people came in droves to play.

Brechtel and Bartholomew are only about five miles apart as the crow flies and are on opposite sides of the Mississippi River. But the courses sustained contrasting damage, especially because of flooding.

Bartholomew was inundated with brackish water after a nearby levee collapsed. The course's new clubhouse was wrecked by wind and water. The maintenance facility sustained substantial damage. Mowers, weed eaters and other equipment were ruined.

The course lost about 90 percent of its trees, including some massive 80-year-old oaks. Many remaining trees, poisoned by the high salinity of the floodwater, died later. A new irrigation system was destroyed after sitting under water for weeks on end — its wiring and conduits rusted and corroded.

Of all the jobs the 55-year-old Carew performed as a superintendent for 24 of his 32 years in New Orleans, the most important was to stay in the city after the hurricane and get his two golf courses open for play.

"I saw so many people get hurt so badly," Carew says. "I wanted to stay

and help fight for the people. It would've been easy to leave. It was hard to stay.

"Every person here has a story, albeit sad, about what they lost and who they lost," Carew continues. "The stories grind on you. I just wanted to do something positive."

Brechtel will receive a detailed makeover when Bartholomew is finished. But the focus now is on Bartholomew. When Mayor Nagin asked Carew how much it would cost to renovate Bartholomew, Carew told him \$11

million. It's a lot of money, for sure, but it has been raised. The city of New Orleans is funding most of the cost with money raised from city bond sales. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is chipping in several million, and other federal funds are being used.

Carew has worked diligently with FEMA representatives the past few years to secure money for the courses' renovations. They were some of the first capital projects approved by FEMA and passed by the city and state.

"I haven't stopped working on this," Carew says. "The mayor and the city want to see some forward motion."

Ann E. Macdonald, director of the department of parks and parkways for the City of New Orleans, says restoration of the golf courses has been a priority for the Nagin administration, which realizes people need an outlet for affordable recreation and entertainment. Most of the people who live in the neighborhoods where Bartholomew and Brechtel are located don't have the money to join country clubs or play upscale public golf courses, she says.

"For the citizens who live here ... we have to have golf venues that are affordable," Macdonald says. "Bartholomew and Brechtel are that."

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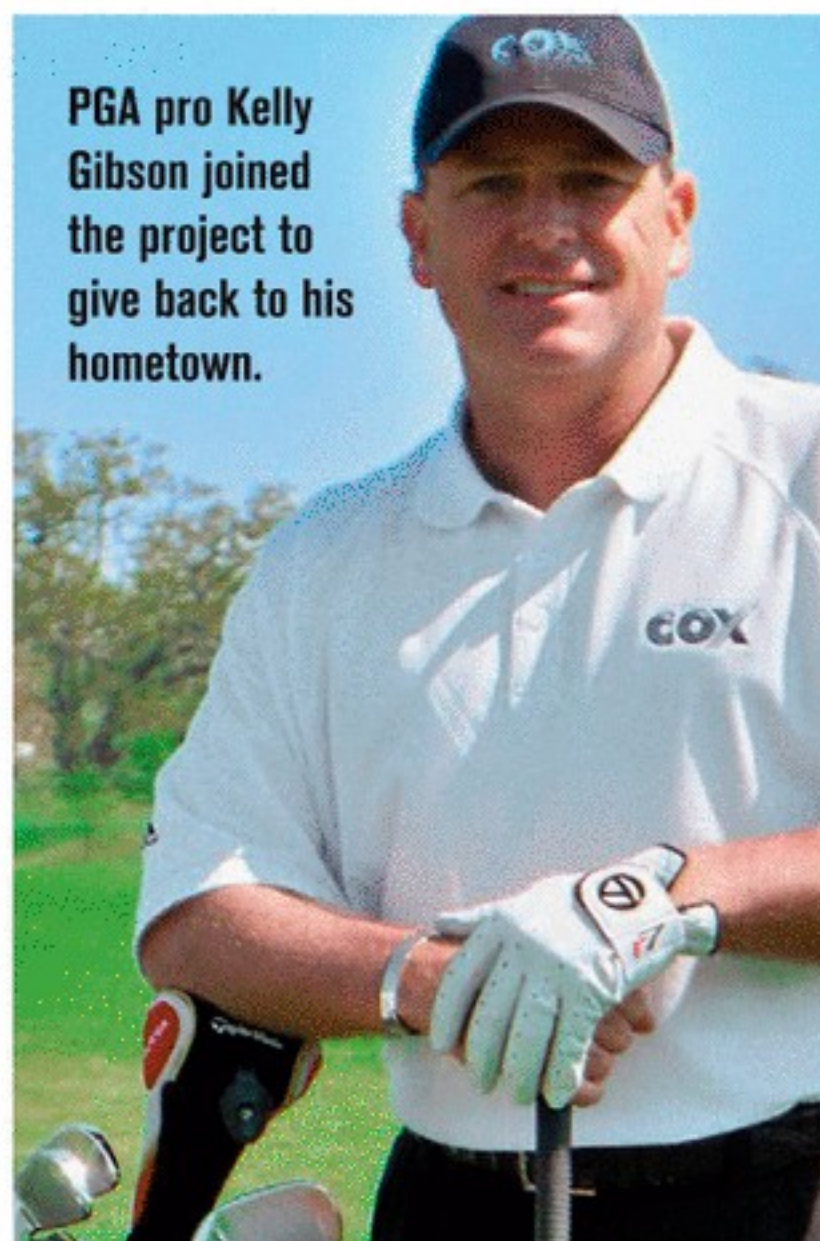
Time Heals

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CAREW has spent the past few months planning — there have been 70- and 80-hour work weeks — for Bartholomew’s renovation. He has been closely involved with the course’s specifications, from grass selection to irrigation head selection.

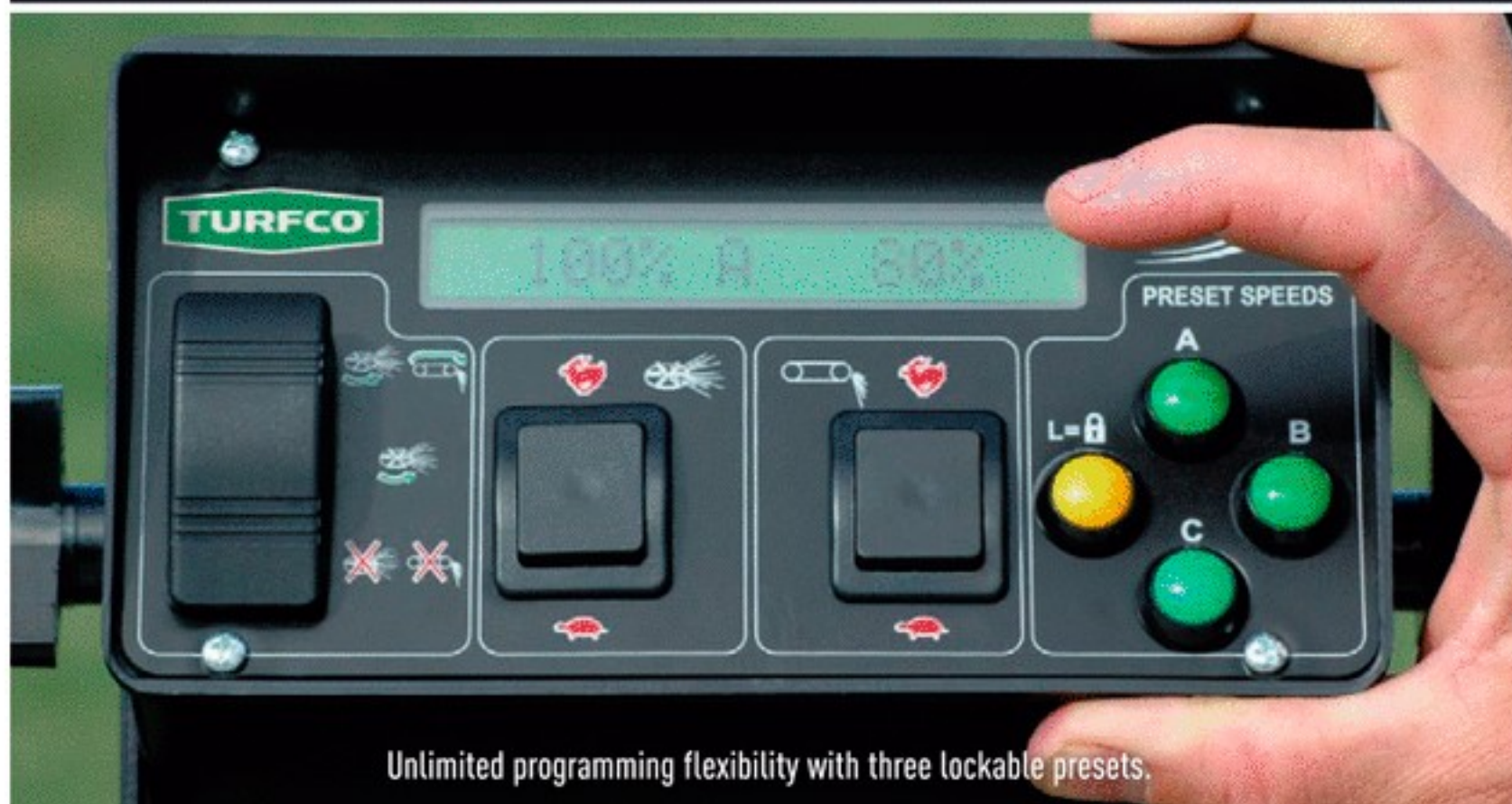
“I want to make sure it’s as good as we can get it,” Carew says, noting Bartholomew will be restored as close to possible to its original design.

River Falls, Wis.-based Garrett Gill was chosen to lead the Bartholomew and Brechtel renovations. Prinsburg, Minn.-based Duininck Golf is doing construction. When Gill first saw Bar-



PGA pro Kelly Gibson joined the project to give back to his hometown.

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tholomew last year, he says he couldn’t imagine what it and the surrounding neighborhood looked like immediately after the hurricane. But as he looked at the course, he could still see its features despite the damage it incurred.

“The structure of the golf course is intact,” Gill says. “With a little bit of effort, we can bring it back to life.”

Gill credits Joe Bartholomew for an excellent design more than 50 years ago and says he has done everything possible to preserve it. The course will be updated with new greens, tees, bunkers and cart paths.

Gill, who has done other design work in Louisiana, learned about Bartholomew and Brechtel through his friend and architecture consultant, Kelly Gibson, a PGA Tour professional, who was born and raised in New Orleans.

Since Katrina hit, Gibson says he has pursued opportunities, many charitable, to help his hometown recover. That includes teaming with Gill on the golf course projects. Gibson grew up playing at Brechtel and played Bartholomew several times. “I’m passionate about New Orleans,” says Gibson, a fifth-generation resident.

Gibson says Gill has a knack for municipal golf course renovations. Bartholomew, a par-72, will be playable for all skill levels.

“Giving people a visually pleasing
Continued on page 38

PHOTO COURTESY: KELLY GIBSON

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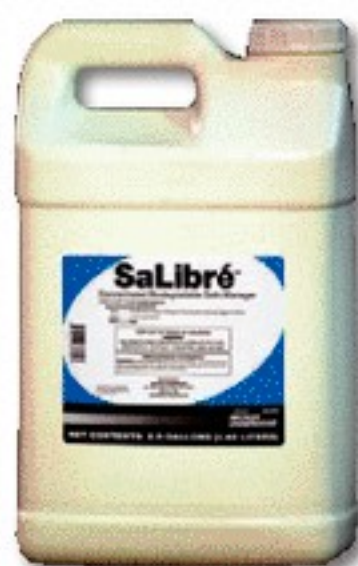
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Time Heals

All of the equipment at Bartholomew was ruined by the hurricane.

Continued from page 36 golf course is not only healthy for the neighbors around there, but it gives them a sense of pride to say "I live by Joe Bartholomew Golf Course," says Gibson, who believes the course can soon become an "economic engine" for the neighborhood and the city.



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THE BARTHOLOMEW renovation began with a complete eradication of the existing turfgrass and other growth. The fairways were mowed down and sprayed with Roundup and Fusilade. The greens and tees were fumigated with methyl bromide.

The course's lagoons will be dredged, and the sediment will be spread on the fairways to build them up about 6 inches so they're crowned. New and deeper lagoons will be built to capture more water during rainstorms. That water will be fed to the irrigation pond, which Carew says didn't house enough water before to irrigate the course properly. The course also will be equipped with a new irrigation system.

Trees will be planted to compensate for the roughly 2,500 trees lost to the hurricane's damage. Carew says he'd like to plant citrus groves on the course so a golfer can pick an orange and eat it while playing.

The greens will be designed according to United States Golf Association specifications. Bud White, director of the Mid-Continent Region for the USGA's Green Section, recommended the course plant a new variety of bermudagrass, Emerald, on greens. Emerald isn't as high maintenance as some bermudagrass varieties and can be overseeded easily, says White, who also recommended the course use Certified Tifway 419 bermudagrass in other areas on the course.

"It's always fun for me to be involved with any golf course that's being renovated, especially when a community is getting the course back," White says.

Phase two of the Bartholomew project includes clubhouse and maintenance facility renovations, of which plans have been drafted and are being reviewed. One aspect that hasn't been determined is where equipment will come from and how it will be paid for to maintain the course.

Fortunately, the down economy hasn't hampered the Bartholomew project. Carew says New Orleans' economy is driven by tourism, which has increased and is pumping

Continued on page 40



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Time Heals

Homes near Bartholomew had to be gutted after the hurricane. But the neighborhood is rebounding.

Continued from page 38

tax dollars into the city. Brechtel won't receive as much money for its renovation because it wasn't damaged as badly. But the course's greens and tees will be renovated and a new irrigation system will be installed. Carew also will get a new maintenance shop, and the Brechtel clubhouse will be renovated.

BIRDS and other wildlife have returned to the Bartholomew Golf Course. And people are coming back to the surrounding neighborhood.

While Carew stands outside Bartholomew's dilapidated clubhouse and talks about the course's future, a school bus chugs down the street and stops. Two boys get off the bus and walk slowly down the street. More people are returning home to their new or repaired houses, many of which were destroyed or badly damaged by Katrina.

"It's almost starting to look like a neighborhood again," Carew says.

Macdonald says the neighbors are excited about Bartholomew's renovation.

"The restoration of this golf course is extremely important as it relates to the restoration of this neighborhood," she says. "For the neighborhood to survive, you need the golf course. And for the golf course to survive, you certainly need the neighborhood to come back."

Carew can hardly wait for the day to see people smiling and enjoying life while playing golf at Bartholomew. It will be a day he'll cherish for as long as he has been coming to the course. And it will become, again, a place he *wants* to visit.



March 2006

"The renovations of Bartholomew and Brechtel will be a healing thing for all of us in New Orleans," Carew says. "I'm proud to be a major part of these projects." ■



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