

*“Here in California, nine months of the year it’s beautiful. Some people are stuck in offices,” Kappelman says. “I haven’t met a superintendent who doesn’t love their job. I think as a whole, we know how lucky we are.”*





Continued from page 20

“Coming from Michigan, it’s financial stability. The reality is there are a lot of showy golf courses. But that might not be the job you want. It’s best to have a place where the job is steady,” Southard says.

San Antonio CC’s McCann echoes those sentiments.

“The financial status of the club is important. There are lots of places to work, but to find a place that is not only financially stable, but also



Daniel McCann

has the means to improve the property?” McCann asks aloud. “If you don’t have that, you’re constantly working with one hand tied behind your back.”

## Attitude is everything

Perhaps many of the superintendents who responded to our survey saying they would stay put are just a glass-half-full group of folks. But that positive thinking actually does have a lot to do with job satisfaction.

David Phipps, the Northwest field staff representative for GCSAA, says his previous gig as the superintendent for Stone Creek GC in Oregon City, Ore., was his

dream job... until another dream job came along. He looks back at his time at Stone



David Phipps

Creek now and realizes that the job was what he made of it. “Building and maintaining a golf course? That’s as good as it gets,” he says. “Every job has its trials. Stone Creek wasn’t perfect, but it was as good as I made it. You can have a rotten day at the golf course, the next day is ten times better. You can’t let the bad days get in your head. It’s always about being positive.”

It literally is about being positive, says Barbara Jaurequi, MS, a nationally certified master addiction counselor, executive coach and author of the book “A.C.E.S. — Adult-Child Entitlement Syndrome.”

“You could never overestimate the value in having an attitude of gratitude. Being grateful is the antidote to negativity and resentment,” Jaurequi says. “I’ve seen scores of people who have had really rough starts in life. They learned that being unhappy doesn’t help with anything.”

Jaurequi suggests to those who aren’t happy with their jobs that they take a self-assessment, and try to view their own position objectively.

“Ask yourself how many negative remarks you made in a day. How many positive? Once the assessment is done, ask yourself: ‘Is this working?’” she says. “That person will figure out that being negative is not working to their advantage.”



Barbara Jaurequi

Wayne Kappelman, superintendent at Sharp Park GC in San Francisco and winner of *Golfdom’s* 2013 Herb Graffis Businessperson of the Year award, says the nature of a superintendent’s work necessitates a positive attitude.

“For superintendents, we deal with the vagaries of weather, of raccoons, of a van-

dal — you never know! If you don’t come to work with a positive attitude, it can be quite defeating,” Kappelman says. “Our work is quite temporary. You have to do it over and over again. You get it mowed,



Wayne Kappelman

set up, looking good, then you have to do it all over again the next day. Without the right attitude, our work can resemble the (Greek) myth of Sisyphus: banished to Hades with the punishment of rolling a rock up a mountain day after day.”

## Dealing with rough days

Being forced to roll a rock up a hill in Hades 24/7 sounds pretty brutal. But to some, it just sounds like fly-mowing bunker edges last Tuesday.

The truth is, people are wired differently, and that affects the way they look at their jobs. Some people are enjoying their dream jobs while others are Mr. Sisyphus.

Count Stanly Moles, superintendent at Indianwood G&CC, Indiantown, Fla., as another superintendent living the dream. “I am just a happy person and look for the silver lining in everything that happens,” he says. “It’s not always easy, and I sometimes have to stop, collect my thoughts and see what part of the elephant I want to eat that day.”



Stanly Moles

When asked what course he would work at if he could choose any in the world, he selected Billy Casper Golf-managed Indianwood G&CC. He was one of the survey respondents who answered our question with a verbatim, “Right where I am.”

Moles says when the pressures of work get to be too much, “wind therapy” — some alone time on his motorcycle — solves all his ills. For his crew, he promotes a positive attitude the old fashioned way.

Continued on page 24

## Greener pastures

Of the 661 respondents to our survey, a whopping 73 respondents said they would stay right where they are. Here are the next five dream courses.

|    |                               |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 33 | AUGUSTA NATIONAL              |
| 22 | PEBBLE BEACH                  |
| 16 | CYPRESS POINT                 |
| 7  | THE OLD COURSE AT ST. ANDREWS |
| 6  | PINEHURST NO. 2               |



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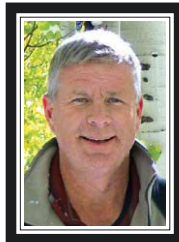
Continued from page 22

“Everyone — even me — likes to hear an ‘at-a-boy!’ at work. As I go through my day and meet with the crew as they’re on the course doing their job, I stop and tell them how much the golfers and I appreciate the fine work they’re doing,” Moles says. “Of course, occasionally bringing in donuts or ordering pizza for lunch helps!”

But what is a superintendent to do when his crew doesn’t respond to positive reinforcement? Both Jaurequi and Southard say that some people just can’t be changed to see the good in their jobs.

“You can try and coach them, inform them about the good things. But some people you can’t change. And then you share their experience with another team,” Southard says, making an effort to tread lightly. “That might not be what you

want to hear in your magazine, but sometimes that’s the best thing you can do for everyone.”



Steve Southard

it often means they’re miserable in life,” Jaurequi says.

### Satisfied to stay

Regardless of how satisfying crew members find their jobs, we must admit we were happy to see so many of *Golfdom’s* readers were, well... happy.

It seems that many superintendents are

## Survey outtakes

Any time we leave a survey question with a fill-in-the-blank answer, we get back some fun responses. Here are a few of our favorite outside-the-box answers:

“A GOVERNMENT-OWNED COURSE WITH 100-PERCENT JOB SECURITY SO I’M NOT TWISTING IN THE WIND OVER NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR SILLY AGENDAS.”

“A 9-HOLE ISLAND JOB, WHERE THERE IS BERMUDA ALL AROUND, HAMMOCKS AND A BEER AT THE END OF THE DAY.”

“TOO OLD TO EVEN CARE ABOUT THAT ANYMORE. JUST TRYING TO GET TO RETIREMENT AND GO FISHING.”

“A COURSE WITH AN UNLIMITED BUDGET AND NO GOLFERS.”

“I WIN THE LOTTERY. . . MY OWN COURSE, MY OWN RULES!”

“IT WOULD BE A BALLPARK. . . FENWAY PARK IN BOSTON.”

“I WANT TO BE A ROCK RADIO PROGRAMMER.”

“WILLIE NELSON’S GOLF COURSE.”

“BUSHWOOD COUNTRY CLUB.”

like our new friend Daniel McCann: fully aware that the place that he works is truly special.

“There are always going to be those things that can get you down. But then I remember that I have the best office. I know people who sit behind a desk all day, staring at a computer. I can always go out and ride the golf course,” McCann says enthusiastically. “I’ll never look at leaving unless I’m bored... but there’s so much to do! Maybe that’s just my personality — maybe I’m never satisfied — but there’s so much to do here before I could ever consider leaving.”

Perhaps it’s never being satisfied... or maybe it’s always being satisfied. ☺

## Could this be “the one”?

Have you thought about the long-term future of you and this course? Could you say “I do” to these greens? Take our survey and find out if your course is a dream come true, or if you need to start seeing other courses.

|   | YES | NO  |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1. Do more than 50% of the members know your name?                          | +6  | +0  |
| 2. Does your mechanic think he could do your job better than you?           | +0  | +7  |
| 3. Are you using a manual irrigation system?                                | +0  | +12 |
| 4. Do you have to post green speeds daily?                                  | +0  | +4  |
| 5. Look at your mowers. Are they more than four colors?                     | +0  | +7  |
| 6. Do most of your golfers envy the cross-town rival?                       | +0  | +5  |
| 7. Do you get along with the other department heads?                        | +4  | +0  |
| 8. Could your office easily be mistaken for a shed?                         | +0  | +3  |
| 9. Are there more items in the break room fridge than in the chemical shed? | +0  | +14 |
| 10. Does your office have a nice view?                                      | +2  | +0  |
| A. Does that view include the pool?   | +5  | +0  |
| 11. Does your course get more visitors than the Texas State Fair?           | +0  | +7  |
| 12. Is your Greens Committee Chair in your office more than you?            | +0  | +6  |
| 13. Do you work more than 60 hours a week in the peak season?               | +0  | +10 |
| 14. Do you spend more time maintaining ski slopes than fairways?            | +0  | +5  |
| 15. Does the course dog prefer the company of the assistant?                | +0  | +3  |

### SCALE:

100 to 80 — Congrats, you’ve found your dream course!  
 79 to 60 — Give it some time... courses can change, you know.  
 59 to 0 — We’re sorry to say, this is a broken relationship.

Special thanks to Charles Soper and Carey Bailey at Fieldstone Golf Club for their help with our survey!



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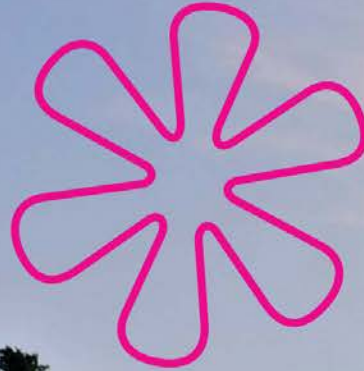


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It cost \$700,000 to create two acres of landscaping around the course, which included 2,000 knockout rosebushes (which are water conservative), crape myrtles, magnolias and 900 new trees. The massive amount of flowers sets the course apart from others in the area.



PHOTOS BY TREV KEMP/COLLIGAN GOLF DESIGN



# \* Flower power \*

From wilting weed to budding rose, here's how one course changed its fate by creating a scenic and player-friendly experience.

BY CHRISTINA THOMAS



There's something special about a municipal golf course — that beat-up old track where people often learn to love the game. Golf on a muni is usually a love-hate relationship: you love it because you've memorized every

blade of grass on the course. It's inexpensive and you can meet the most interesting people in a pickup game. You hate it because a city owned course can take five hours to play since the tee sheet is overflowing with hackers. But you can't help but return again and again.

*Continued on page 28*





# Flower Power

Continued from page 27

Two years ago Stevens Park Golf Course in Dallas was your typical muni course. Not anymore, thanks to a major reconstruction project. It's lush, green, healthy and the general manager guarantees to get players around the course in four hours and 15 minutes — even on Saturdays.

When asked to compare the course before and after the renovation, superintendent Frank Hutcheson can't help but smile.

"The old course just had push up greens that were built in the 1920s and '30s," Hutcheson says. "It was a typical municipal golf club, but now it can compete with all the private clubs in the area."

Hutcheson, who joined the Stevens Park staff seven years ago, said the course in 2010 and the one today can hardly be compared. The old course was too short for modern-day golf at less than 5,900 yards. The grasses were outdated, and the greens had been around since the 1940s.



**"The upscale renovation put us in a whole different ballpark than what we used to be in. People are coming from all over, even golfers**

**who belong to local private clubs."**

## Frank Hutcheson

SUPERINTENDENT

Stevens Park originally opened in 1924 and reached its prime in the 1980s, averaging 63,000 rounds annually. But as more courses saturated the area and the golf industry entered a recession, the course began to suffer. Conditions deteriorated. Play plummeted to nearly 35,000 rounds in 2010. It was time for a drastic makeover or risk losing one of the oldest golf courses in Dallas.

## Rock solid obstacles

Although it took just 310 days to rebuild Stevens Park, the remodeling was difficult — and expensive. The project cost approximately \$9.7 million, a jaw dropping number for most city-run golf courses. General Manager and Director of Golf, Jim Henderson raised the money through a combination of bonds and borrowed funds from the city, as well as a \$3.5 million loan from Dallas Water Utilities. The city hired Arlington, Texas-based Colligan Golf De-



sign and the well-known Wadsworth Golf Course Construction Company to work on the project.

The design team, led by John Colligan and his associate Trey Kemp, and the contractor faced their first obstacle the moment the bulldozer hit the dirt. The course was built on caliche rock and in many places it was barely three inches under the soil.

"The contractors literally peeled all the dirt off the rock, and then cut it to reconfigure and reshape the fairways, greens and tees," Hutcheson says. "It was an intense process, but it was a lot of fun watching the old course being stripped away."

Henderson says to stay within the budget they had to come up with their own soil supply by digging several pits near the creek on the golf course. Then the contractors used all the old trees, cart paths and other debris to fill up the pits again. To add extra soil, they sodded the entire course with Premier Tif fairways and Tifton 10 rough grass, except for the greens, which were seeded with Mini Verde.

The five roads that cross the 110-acre golf course presented another concrete barrier that left them with few options to add length to the course. Colligan was able to lengthen the course to 6,300 yards by rerouting 12 of the original holes. Additionally, he designed the fairways with mounding and collection areas to create more player-friendly landing zones.

"We didn't want to build another championship golf course," Henderson says. "Everyone is building golf courses that are 7,000-plus yards and so hard to play. If you're going to lose golf balls all day, how is that going to be any fun?"

## Spring time all year round

Creating a beautiful landscape was extremely important to Henderson, whose goal was to create a fun, player-friendly golf course that was also attractive. He knew they needed something unique to set the course apart from others in the area. It was the assistant director at the time, Barbara Kindig who came up with the idea of a garden-themed golf course.

"It's totally opposite of the way [designers] are trying to build golf courses nowadays, which is building courses with zero landscape that use grasses and waste areas," Henderson says.

He explains they wanted the course to blend seamlessly with the historic Kessler Park neighborhood by using the same

Continued on page 30





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# Flower Power

Continued from page 28

plant material found around the houses to create an attractive public golf course that would compete with the beauty of high-end private clubs in the area.

It cost \$700,000 to create two acres of landscaping around the course, which included 2,000 knockout rosebushes (which

are water conservative), crape myrtles, magnolias and 900 new trees. Augusta National inspired the spring garden theme, Henderson says, so he chose flowers that would stay in bloom most of the year.

“The sheer beauty of the course is something that will set us apart for years to come,” the general manager says.

## Hard work pays off

The result has proven to be worth the effort. Now the once dying municipal course in Dallas is bursting with color and life, as well as a full tee sheet almost every day. The course reopened in October 2011 and had 55,000 rounds of golf in its first year, averaging 200 to 220 golfers a day. Neither Henderson nor Hutcherson expect it to slow down.

“The upscale renovation put us in a whole different ballpark than what we used to be in,” Hutcherson says. “We have a completely different clientele playing here every day. People are coming from all over, even golfers who belong to local private clubs.”

Of course, not every city has millions of dollars to spend on a muni, but Henderson adopted a method that he said helps keep tee sheets filled daily that any course can use. When the course reopened, it moved to 10 minute tee times instead of the traditional eight. Henderson said it was controversial for the city because it means booking 20 percent fewer golfers, but he believes it works out for a better pace of play and happier customers.

“On the weekdays we’re staying booked because customers know we’re not going to cram as many people as we can onto the golf course, so they’re going to have fun playing,” Henderson says. “It’s about not being greedy, and it’s about providing a quality golfing experience.”

Henderson is no longer concerned if long-time customers would accept the new Stevens Park.

“My own dad and my grandpa used to bring me here to play golf, and many other people grew up playing this course back in the ’60s, ’70s and ’80s as well,” he says. “Now when those old players come back, they’re all so happy it turned out to be such a great product.”

Christina Thomas is a former collegiate golfer and a freelance golf journalist living in San Diego. This is her first story for *Golfdom*.

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