



“Cruz Control” - Don Paul, CGCS & DeLaveaga GC

By Ken Williams, CGCS

When it comes to nice places to work in this world, a golf course has to rank right up there. And when your course lies high above the Pacific in beautiful Santa Cruz, California, life is good. That’s what Don Paul, CGCS enjoys at the DeLaveaga Golf Course in Santa Cruz, with its entertainment and easygoing life-style, is just a perfect fit for Don.

Don’s golf course, DeLaveaga, is an 18-hole Municipal Course owned and operated by the City of Santa Cruz. The course is located in DeLaveaga Park, a 500-acre park donated to the City to use for recreational purposes. The golf course takes up 175 acres of the park and is completely surrounded by natural forest. The course averages a robust 75,000 rounds a year.

Architect Bert Stamps designed DeLaveaga. It plays to a par of 72 and measures 6,300 yards. The course opened in 1970 and has a full driving range, BBQ facility, and restaurant and bar. The course is operated by the City of Santa

Cruz Parks and Recreation staff and has no management company involvement. The maintenance staff numbers 12, including Don, his able assistant Miles Hicks, and quality mechanic Gene Lynberg. All employees are unionized City Maintenance Workers who receive a full benefits package plus salary. The course is a member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program and is working toward full certification.

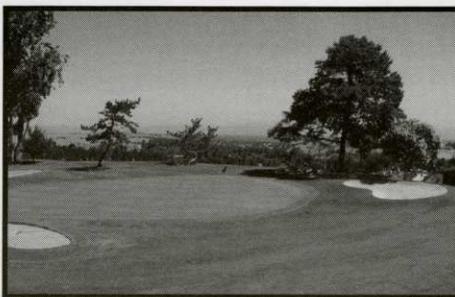
Although there are no plans to expand the golf course, Don has stayed busy with a number of improvement projects. The maintenance building and yard have been expanded to facilitate equipment storage and interior improvements to the office, break room, locker room, and restrooms. Bunkers are being renovated both in-house and with the help of a contractor. They are replacing the old sand with an improved whiter one, adding new drainage, and reshaping the contours and edges. Don says, “I’ve learned a lot of patience in being involved with these projects,

from dealing with City government requirements and red tape, to working with different contractors. One of the most difficult things through all that is trying to produce the results we are looking for.” On top of that, Don is currently seeking a consultant to develop a Golf Course Master Plan for the entire facility.

Don’s been at DeLaveaga for nine years where he earned his GCSAA Superintendent Certification in October of 1998. Prior to DeLaveaga, he spent three years as Assistant Superintendent at Marin CC. He also worked on the crew at both Spyglass Hill and Poppy Hills for one-year stints. Don is originally from Corvallis, Oregon and was involved with two golf courses there before moving to California in 1988. Don received his BS degree from Oregon State in Horticulture with a Turf Management Concentration. Don credits his success in the business to the great mentors he’s had over the years. It started with OSU professor Tom Cook, and followed with superintendents

Tom Zoller, Dick Fluter, Paul Colleran, Michael Sauls, and Stan Burgess. Don is also quick to credit his father who introduced him to the game of golf at age eight. “My dad gets a lot of credit, for introducing me to the game, teaching me to appreciate the game and the etiquette involved, being my biggest fan and supporter through high school golf.” “He allowed me the opportunity to play thousands of golf courses and encouraged me to pursue the Golf Course Superintendent Field.”

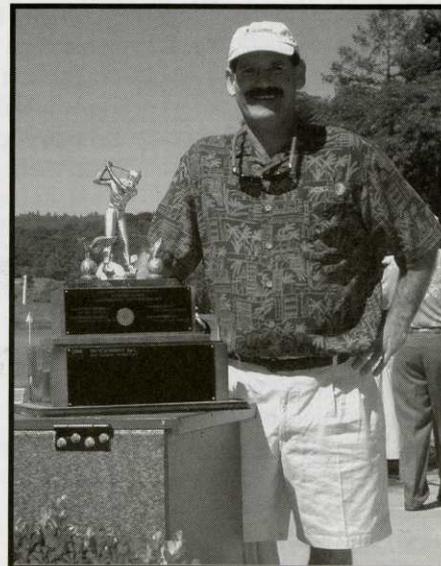
For fun, Don plays golf at least once a week and tries to play tennis twice a week. He’s single and loves walking the beaches of Santa Cruz, hanging out with friends, and listening to music. He also enjoys going to church. As far as aspirations go, Don has a great outlook on life, “I just want to be happy in whatever I’m doing, wherever I’m doing it.” And being a well-respected Golf Course Superintendent in beautiful Santa Cruz, it sounds like Don’s got things on his own personal “Cruz control.”



Above: Palo Alto Hills 9th Green overlooking the Bay

Left: Host Mike Garvale, CGCS receives a plaque from Jeff Shafer

Right: Gary Skolnik returning the Superintendent/Pro Trophy



See pages 6 and 7 for other pictures