

**T**he old Grapevine at *Golf-dom* has been humming as the end of 2000 nears and the big GCSAA Show in Dallas looms in a few months. Here are a few selected grapes we've plucked from around the industry for your edification and amusement:

■ **Tour de Farce.** For once, a local media guy gets a story right. Craig DeVreize, sports columnist for the *Quad City Times*, called the forced departure of TPC at Deere Run superintendent John Netwal "a dirty deal and a predictable bit of scapegoating by a PGA Tour that looks less and less like the well-oiled machine we thought it was. Truth told, the Tour cut serious corners trying to make this small-market course pay quick dividends."

Having attended Deere Run's opening in East Moline, Ill., I can vouch for the fact that Netwal did a great job under tremendous pressure from a profit-hungry Tour.

■ **Call him Agro Al.** Simplot's emergence as a golf industry power continues with the establishment of Agrotain, a new business group led by our good friend (and my personal golf coach) Al Nees, the long-time Milorganite executive. Agrotain will make and sell additives that enhance urea performance. Speaking of which, Al is looking for something to enhance the gridiron performance of his first-to-worst Wisconsin Badgers.

■ **Better is better.** A few months ago, I was in the Chicago area for some meetings and some "business golf" with Bruce Jasurda of Tyler Enterprises, an employee-owned formulator and distributor that serves golf courses around the Great Lakes and Midwest.

Bruce emptied my pockets on the golf course, but filled my mind in the 19th hole with his views on the importance of trust between superintendents and suppliers. "We view our customers' trust as a moral pact, not simply a business transaction. We don't want to get big or go national and lose that. Bigger isn't necessarily better. Better is better."

Think about that the next time you're on hold for 45 minutes waiting for "the next

## Heard It Through The Grapevine

BY PAT JONES



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available Microsoft customer service representative."

■ **Off the beach.** Our good buddy Ted Horton has called it quits at Pebble Beach to spend more time with his family and do some consulting. Horton is unquestionably one of the finest executive superintendents – and gentlemen – in this business.

■ **Coming soon.** The leaner, meaner Scotts Co. will launch a line of high-quality branded seed blends early next year. Progress also continues on the development of a Roundup Ready bentgrass variety set for wide release as soon as 2003. Test plots are being established in the Chicago area as you read this.

Another note from Marysville, Ohio: Scott Todd, the executive who sent Christmas Eve pink slips to the Scotts tech rep force and oversaw the sale of the ProTurf group to The Andersons, is no longer with the company.

■ **Will PDI pass?** We don't know how the chapter delegates will vote, but we have a good idea how the rank-and-file feels. Why? Because *Golfdom* spent some of its own bucks to do the first and only independent study of how superintendents would vote on PDI.

We also asked about other burning issues like job security, e-commerce, golfer recognition and the quality of the service received from suppliers. Look for the full results next month in our "Golfdom Report" special issue.

One hint about the PDI findings — the folks in Lawrence probably won't be thrilled.

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