

### Business briefs

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#### Major Challenge winners participate in Deere Pro-Am

James Goins of Pembroke Pines, Fla.; Marcel LaRose of Red Deer, Alberta; Bradley Brandt of Lincoln, Neb.; and John Holmes of Sundre, Alberta, were the big winners in the second annual Major Challenge, sponsored by John Deere and *Golfdom*. The four men each received an all-expenses paid trip to play in the John Deere Classic Monday Pro-Am at the TPC at Deere Run in September.

In a similar vein, Milliken Turf Products announced that superintendents Dave Kohley and John Cunningham won all-expense paid golf trips to Ireland. Milliken Turf Products selected the two winners in a random drawing of about 250 entrants in the 2003 Take the Emerald Isle Challenge. The two took their trips this month.

#### Ewing acquires Oasis

Phoenix-based Ewing Irrigation Products has acquired Oasis Irrigation. The acquisition leads to the creation of Ewing's new Moreno Valley Branch in Riverside, Calif.

#### Rogers joins Rain Bird

Rain Bird named Robert Rogers as a rotor product manager for the company's golf division. He will help manage the company's family of rotor products and execute new product development activities.

#### Gullikson tabbed for award

Jeffrey L. Gullikson, certified superintendent of Spokane (Wash.) CC, will receive GCSAA's 2004 President's Award for Environmental Stewardship in recognition of his involvement in the Golf and the Environment initiative. Gullikson, a 20-year member of GCSAA, will receive the award in February at the GCSAA show.

#### Plumley joins Cleary

Cleary Chemical named Karen Plumley as its new director of research and regulatory affairs. Scott Trbovich, Mike McGrath and Steve Stringer were hired as technical sales representatives.

## Superintendent Wouldn't Want It Any Other Way

### TOURNAMENT RETURNING TO HARTFORD AFTER ALL

By Anthony Pioppi

**Y**ou could almost hear the state of Connecticut sigh in relief when PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem announced a corporate sponsorship from Buick for next year's Greater Hartford Open (GHO).

Finchem's announcement came during this year's Buick Open, which was thought to be the last. After a year of being on its own, but still able to survive thanks to more than 35 local "bridge sponsors," the 52<sup>nd</sup> installment of the event in July appeared to be the finale. In one way it is: Hartford will no longer be part of the tournament name beginning in 2004 when it changes to the Buick Championship.

If Thomas DeGrandi, superintendent at TPC River Highlands, site of the GHO was not jumping up and down over the deal you could understand why. The effects of close to 200,000 spectators trampling his golf course annually and the amount of time away from home preparing for the GHO can take its toll on a man.

But in fact he was happy.

"The Greater Hartford JayCees put a lot of money back into the community," DeGrandi said. "It's important for the city of Hartford and the state."

Since the tournament began, the JayCees, a leadership training organization for people between the ages of 21 and 39, has donated \$20 million to charities throughout the Nutmeg State through its foundation funded through the GHO.

After years of economic downturn, Hartford — the capital — is going through somewhat of a rebirth. A GHO swansong would have set the cause back dramatically. Instead, it turned out to be a great year, except for area superintendents.

For DeGrandi and others in the area the season was a tough one. A winter that wreaked havoc was followed by wet spring and summer turned even wetter during tournament week soaking River Highlands where DeGrandi has worked for 12 seasons, the last 10 as superintendent.

The month leading up to the event was the toughest for DeGrandi and his crew of 31. DeGrandi got to see his children briefly each night for about a month as he logged extensive hours preparing for the tournament. He was barely home when it was still light, never mind for dinner.

He still tried to perform his nightly fatherly duty, reading to children Myles, 9, and Emma, 6.

At least his children understood what his job entails. Both golf at the TPC and usually visit their father at least twice during the week of the tournament, including Sunday. Last year DeGrandi rode up the 18<sup>th</sup> fairway with Myles at his side as Phil Mickelson was making his way to the amphitheater green to the tune of 40,000 fans-plus fans jammed into the bowl area cheering him on to his second-consecutive GHO victory.

"You could *feel* it," DeGrandi said of the roar. "That's why the tournament isn't going away."

And that's OK with him.