

Off The Fringe

NEWS WITH A HOOK

Business briefs

Rounds up for first half of '04

The National Golf Foundation (NGF) reports in its Quarterly Rounds Played Report that rounds were up 2.5 percent for the first six months of 2004 when compared to the same time last year.

Rounds increased .9 percent in the second quarter and 6.9 percent in the first quarter. April was the strongest month nationwide with an increase of 4.9 percent, while May and June were slightly down. The nearly 1 percent gain for the quarter compares to a nearly 3 percent loss in 2003 from 2002.

This report marks the third consecutive quarter that rounds have increased over the previous year. NGF estimates that about one-third of rounds in the United States occur in each of the second and third quarters, so the next quarter will have a significant impact on whether the six-month gains will continue.

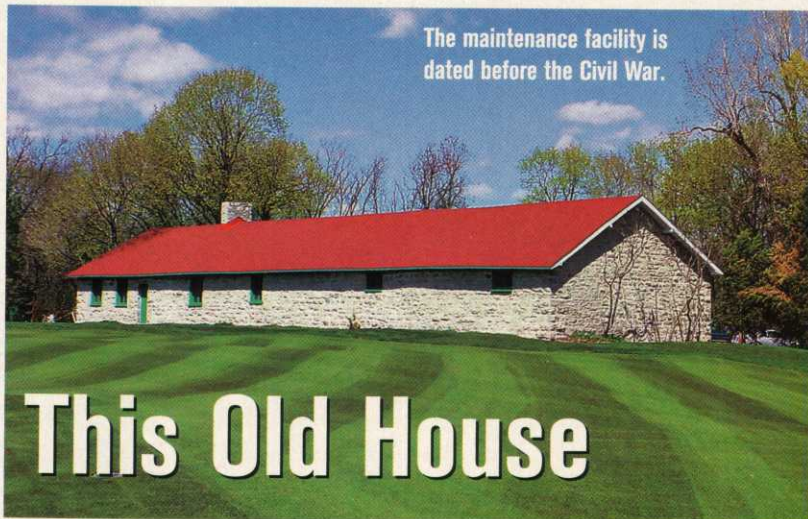
How did Hudson Hills ever get built?

It takes a special occasion to upstage a former president, but that was the case when the Mark Mungeam-designed Hudson Hills Golf Course, in Newcastle, N.Y., celebrated its grand opening in late May.

Bill Clinton, a resident of neighboring Chappaqua, was on hand to cut the ribbon, but the layout itself — a daily-fee design on 150 acres of rolling terrain — was definitely the star attraction. The last time a public course debuted here in tony Westchester County, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was midway through his second term.

Westchester has always been a golf mecca — for the privileged. There are 59 private clubs there. How exactly were 150 acres in the heart of America's most lucrative real estate market made available for the county's first public golf course in 66 years?

Briefs continue on page 18



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CLUB DE GOLF BEAUCONSFIELD

QUEBEC CLUB STAKES ITS CLAIM TO HAVING OLDEST MAINTENANCE FACILITY IN NORTH AMERICA. ANY CHALLENGERS?

By Curt Harler

The oldest golf course maintenance facility in North America might just be the one at Club de Golf Beaconsfield in Pointe-Claire, Quebec.

The facility for the private, 18-hole course dates before the Klondike Gold Rush, before the Canadian-Pacific Railway linked the country and way before Canada's confederation as a sovereign nation in 1867.

In U.S. terms, the maintenance facility goes back well before the Civil War. It likely dates to the presidency of Franklin Pierce, before Minnesota or Kansas became states.

Doug Meyer, certified superintendent at Beaconsfield, is staking his claim to the title of having the oldest maintenance facility on the continent. While the building was not

always used for golf, we are willing to say the crown is Beaconsfield's until someone can prove his or her maintenance facility is older.

In the mid 1800s, a bridge was needed to span the St. Lawrence River. The task of laying foundations for the Victoria Bridge began in 1854, Meyer relates. In its commission to build the bridge, the Grand Trunk Railway determined that the Pointe-Claire Quarry was the ideal source for the huge limestone blocks required for the job.

"The stone-cutting site was the limestone plateau that now forms the base for the 12th tee, the field bar, the 11th tee, the practice putting green, the 1st tee and the backdrop for the 15th hole," Meyer says.

The company built a rail line running from the site to Lac St. Louis,

Continued on page 16

Off The Fringe



Although a new maintenance facility was built in 1984, "The Barn" is still used as a storage facility for turf equipment.

Continued from page 15

where barges were loaded with 100 tons of quarry stone and sent down the river directly to the bridge site.

"The quarry operators built two buildings at the time — one to house horses used in the hauling operations and the other to house the stone workers who lived out of the district," Meyer explains.

The stable, which fell into disrepair, was finally removed from the 14th fairway in 1977. The other building, which members today refer to as "The Barn," still stands alongside the 16th fairway. It's an integral part of the hole.

"It has been in continuous use since its construction ... first as a bunkhouse, then as a storage building for dynamite and blasting powder," Meyer says.

When the newly formed Beaconsfield Golf Club purchased the land, the north end of the building became the first clubhouse while horses were stabled in the south end. Later, the building was put to use as the golf course maintenance building for the club.

In 1984, a new, modern facility was constructed for the turf maintenance department. Today the barn is still used as a storage facility for turf equipment as well as a paint room. The stalls for the horses that were used in the early days for maintaining the course are still in place.

In 2003, major restoration was done on the building, including repairs to the roof, windows and stonework. Plans include restoration of parts of the interior for use as meeting rooms for the greens committee and for staff rooms.

"The 30-inch-thick stone walls of the barn are still in good condition, and I fully expect the building to stand for many more years," Meyer says. "It's not listed on any historical registers, and I do not expect it to be so." (That is because it continues to be a working building, not merely a museum.) Meyer adds, "Its role at Beaconsfield will no doubt continue to evolve."

Quotable

"Disband greens committees. More damage has been done to golf courses by country club green committees than all the floods, hurricanes, gophers, pestilence, fungi and other natural disasters combined."

— Joe Logan of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on the committees that many superintendents love to hate.

"Well, the great thing is I don't have to play. I choose to play whatever tournaments I want to play in."

— Tiger "What a Great Life" Woods on his profession (*The Wire*).

"I've found that talking agronomics to superintendents is better than talking products to them. My style is to get up there and talk agronomics and not beat on them so much about products."

— Superintendent-turned-salesman Gary Grigg of Grigg Brothers on his selling strategy.

The Willie Park-designed course is the oldest Montreal golf club on its original site, having been formed in June 1902. The course was built on the former site of the Pointe-Claire Quarry and the Charlebois farm.

Meyer has a history at the course, too.

"Working at Beaconsfield has special meaning for me," he says. "My great-grandfather came to Canada to work as an engineer on the Victoria Bridge, and it's quite possible he visited the quarry site to inspect the ongoing work."

"What a change he would find if he could see it now."

Harler is managing editor for Golfdom's TurfGrass Trends.

Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 15

"The main portion of the land we used for Hudson Hills used to be a golf course," explains Mungeam, a partner with Uxbridge, Mass.-based Cornish, Silva and Mungeam. "It was a private club called Pine Ridge when it opened in the 1920s, though the club changed its name many times: It became Sunset Hills, then Pine Ridge again before it took the name Hudson Hills Golf Club in the mid-1960s."

The club closed in 1982, when IBM purchased the property with plans to build a corporate research laboratory there. Those plans never materialized. The county stepped in, bought the land back and retained Mungeam to design a new course.

Cleghorn named president of PTI

Sylacauga, Ala.-based Pursell Technologies Inc. (PTI) promoted Arnold Cleghorn to president. PTI is celebrating its centennial year, and Cleghorn represents the first non-family member to hold the office of president. Cleghorn has been with PTI for more than 20 years, most recently as senior vice president and chief operating officer. He will continue as COO.

Buffalo acquires topdressers

Buffalo Turbine recently acquired Terracare's Terratopper line of topdressers. Production of the New Buffalo Turbine BT-1000 Terratopper (Terracare's T-1000) commenced in June at the Buffalo Turbine Manufacturing facility in Springfield, N.Y.

George Hamilton Died as He Lived – With Grace

PENN STATE PROFESSOR SUCCUMBS TO CANCER AT 43

By Frank H. Andorka Jr., Managing Editor

George Hamilton's impact on the industry could be measured by many different criteria, but no singular measure of success could ever fully explain the effect he had on so many people's lives — including mine — over the years.

I first experienced George, an assistant professor of turfgrass management at Penn State University, who died in July at 43 after a yearlong battle with pancreatic cancer, at the 1999 Penn State Golf Turf Conference when he was

a senior lecturer. I joined *Golfdom* a mere three months before and was still trying to get my bearings in the industry. I asked him for his advice about what I should be listening for next.

I needn't have feared rejection or scorn, of course (indeed, I sincerely doubt George was capable of those

emotions). Instead, he shook my hand warmly after I introduced myself and seemed genuinely concerned that I not feel left out of the conference's proceedings. I never forgot

George's generosity of spirit, and it never left him, either — not even in the face of the biggest battle of his life this past year.

I appreciated the comfort he felt in his own skin, his ever-present optimism and his essential humanity. That's why the news of George's death hits me particularly hard — I was so sure that by

sheer force of his personality and will that he would win this battle, too. The industry will be a poorer place without him.



George Hamilton: Industry will be a poorer place without him.

*A longer version of this piece can be seen at www.golfdom.com in the July 15 edition of the *Golfdom Insider* newsletter.*

Candid Camera and a Hole-in-One

A Cleveland entrepreneur came up with a great idea that led to a great hole-in-one contest at a great Cleveland golf course.

First, the golf course is called Manakiki Golf Course, a classic Donald Ross design located in the Cleveland suburb of Willoughby Hills.

Second, the entrepreneur, Mike Burkons, developed a cool hole-in-one monitoring system that is vital to the contest. Through Burkons' extensive knowledge of outdoor surveillance cameras, the course was able to set up a system that eliminates the

need for human monitors and the organizational challenge of arranging such a contest.

Third, the contest, which began in late July, runs through this season. Every paying golfer will be awarded \$1,000 if he or she makes a hole in one on Manakiki's No. 7. Every golfer is given a ticket from the cashier upon paying for their rounds. When golfers reach No. 7, they insert their tickets into the kiosk at the tee. Once a ticket is read and validated, the surveillance camera monitors a golfer's

first shot to see if he or she makes a hole-in-one.

Golfers can also purchase \$1 to \$5 upgrades to increase the value of the prize (if they make holes-in-one) when paying for their rounds. For instance, a \$4 upgrade brings \$7,500 in cash and a \$1,000 gift certificate for golf at Manakiki.

Also, for every \$1 upgrade, 10 cents is donated to the First Tee of Cleveland.

For more information about installing the hole-in-one monitoring system on your course, call 216-241-3202.

Off The Fringe

Kip Can

SUPERINTENDENT WINS INAUGURAL SUPERINTENDENT'S CUP AT PEOPLE VS. THE PROS

By Larry Aylward, Editor

Superintendent Kip Wilson came close, but there still was a cigar when it was over.

Wilson nearly earned the right to play John Daly for \$100,000 in the People vs. the Pros national tournament held last month at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina. The spoils weren't bad, however. Wilson, who lost to a Michigan golfer for the right to play Daly, ended up playing in and winning the event's Superintendent's Cup — sponsored by BASF Turf & Ornamental — and collecting a \$10,000 check and \$10,000 worth of free BASF products.

"This was a dream come true," said Wilson, who played for the Superintendent's Cup on Pinehurst's famed No. 2 course.

Wilson, superintendent of American Legion Golf Course in Kokomo, Ind., was one of 12 superintendents who participated in the People vs. the Pros tournament, which will be televised on ESPN in October. BASF sent the superintendents, all winners from regional qualifying tournaments held around the country, to the tournament and put them up at Pinehurst for several nights.

The second-annual People vs. the Pros featured 240 amateur golfers who competed in two three-day, 54-hole tournaments using their registered handicaps. The two winners in those tournaments — one in a 50-and-over division and one in a 49-and-under division — were pitted in head-to-head competition against PGA professionals Gary McCord and Daly, respectively.

BASF introduced the Superinten-



Kip Wilson (white shirt) accepts the Superintendent's Cup's first-place trophy from Steve Briggs, director of BASF's Specialty Products Department. Second-place finisher Matthew Fitzpatrick is to the far left, and GCSAA CEO Steve Mona is to the far right. Between Wilson and Briggs is Scott Van Pelt of ESPN.

dent's Cup this year. The tournament featured the top two superintendents overall from the three-day tournaments squaring off on Pinehurst No. 2. Wilson defeated Matthew Fitzpatrick, superintendent of Dublin (Ga.) Country Club, who won \$5,000.

Wilson was near the top of the leader board on the final day of the three-day tournament, but he and two others in the foursome lost to John Sniegowski of Cadillac, Mich., who went on to defeat Daly the next day and earn the \$100,000. (McCord also lost to amateur Phil Johnson in the 50-and-over division.) But Wilson, a 15 handicap, played strong the next day to win the Superintendent's Cup. He said he plans to invest some of the money in a college fund for his two small children. "My owner told me I wasn't going to get a raise for a couple of years," Wilson joked.

Wilson also said he plans on redeeming the \$10,000 in free product for Insignia and Emerald, BASF's two new fungicides.

After getting a taste of playing a tournament for money, Wilson knows how pressure-packed the PGA Tour



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WINNERCOMM

John Daly (center) played a round on Pinehurst No. 2 with several representatives from sponsors of the People vs. the Pros. Daly played six holes with (from left) William Strickland, senior marketing manager for BASF Professional Turf; Bill Wisdom, group vice president of BASF Agricultural Products North America; Steve Mona, CEO of the GCSAA; and Jim Wilburn, president and CEO of Winnercomm. After playing three of the six holes with Daly, Wilburn remarked, "John, we were hitting the ball pretty good until you started playing with us." To which Daly replied, "I was hitting the ball pretty good until I started playing with you, too." Everyone guffawed.

must be. "Anybody who says that's an easy job ... they don't know what they're talking about," he said.

Wilson, who took his wife Stacy to the event, said he would never forget the experience, especially playing on Pinehurst No. 2.

"You know when you walk onto a course that the big boys are playing — it's just phenomenal," he said. "Every little blade of grass is in the perfect shape. It's trimmed real tight. The greens roll just as true as they can be."

Now Wilson can say, "I won at Pinehurst."