

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.

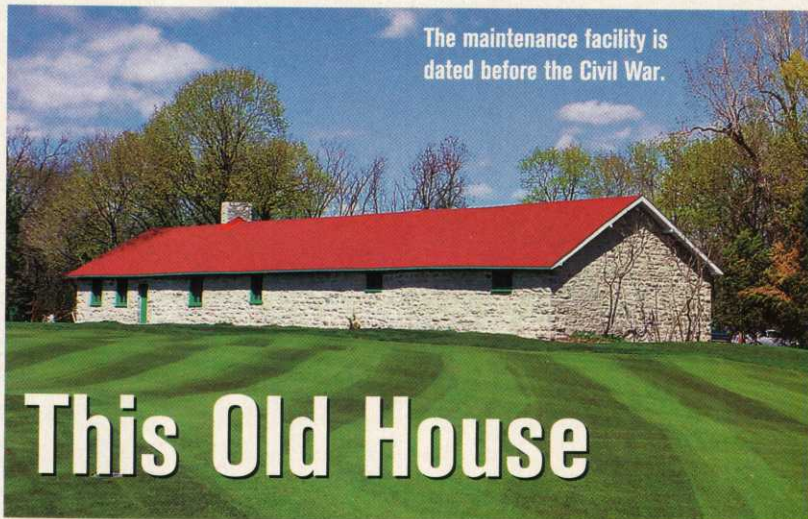
How did Hudson Hills ever get built?

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



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 Beaucensfield 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 Beaucensfield, 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 Beaucensfield'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

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.