

# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### New year starts with a ... clunk

January didn't just signify a new year and a hoard of resolutions — it also signified a drop in golf rounds played, according to the National Golf Foundation (NGF). Total U.S. rounds played dropped 4 percent in January 2005 vs. January 2004.

The good news (if you want to call it that) is there was a darn good non-economic reason for the big drop. You guessed it, Mother Nature — this time of the rainy kind. The Southwest was awash with record rains the first month of the year and golf rounds plummeted 18.6 percent.

The South Central region was down 15.3 percent. Rounds were up in the Southeast. Central/South Florida was up 0.3 percent and the Southeast states were up 12.3 percent.

### Arredondo resigns from GCSAA

Julian Arredondo, the chief operating officer of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) the last two years, has resigned from the association. He came to the GCSAA as its chief financial officer in December 1993 and, in March 2003, replaced Chuck Borman as COO.

"Julian and I came to GCSAA at the same time," GCSAA CEO Steve Mona said. "He played an integral role in strengthening the association and positioning it as a leading golf organization."

### Message heard, group says

Project EverGreen, according to its executive director, successfully conveyed its message — that well-maintained green spaces provide economic, lifestyle and environmental benefits to the consumer — in its debut at the Golf Industry Show in February.

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## Out of Retirement

MANNY MIHAILIDES COULDN'T BE HAPPIER SELLING AN IRRIGATION PRODUCT THAT HIS SON INVENTED

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**T**he heck with hanging out at home and swaying in a hammock. Manny Mihailides decided to come out of retirement and sell hose syringing systems. And at 73 years old, the gregarious Mihailides couldn't be happier.

But Mihailides is not selling just any hose system, mind you. It happens to be one invented by his son, David Mihailides, a former Rhode Island superintendent.

"I love it," Manny says of this second career (his first was as salesman in the foodservice industry). "I'm helping my son, and that makes me feel good."

David invented the DGM System (for Direct underGround Maintenance and his initials) earlier in the decade. The DGM System is a syringing hose system that's stored underground near golf course greens. A few years ago David decided to team with Reelcraft Industries, a Columbia City, Ind.-based hose reel producer to manufacture and market his product.

Manny liked the product so much that he decided to end his retirement in 2002 after three years to sell the product. His official title is sales manager for DGM Systems LLC.



Manny Mihailides (left) and his son David. "Our relationship is stronger now than it has ever been," David says.

"He came out of retirement because he doesn't have a still bone in his body," the 41-year-old David says. "He was going crazy doing nothing."

Manny says it's thrilling to sell a product invented by his son.

"He's well known and his product is well known," Manny says. "That's exciting to me and our family."

At the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference & Show, where Reelcraft Industries was an exhibitor, Manny, dressed businesslike in a tweed coat, looked happy to be there. He was enthusiastic when talking about the product to potential customers (picture Dick Vitale talking hoops during the NCAA Tournament).

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PHOTO BY: LARRY AYWARD





PHOTO BY: CRAIG ZELLERS

## SUPERINTENDENT SPENDS WINTER TENDING TO GOLF COURSE SNOWMOBILE BUSINESS

By Craig F. Zellers

**D**avid Laurie didn't spend the winter inside his maintenance facility watching the snowflakes fall. Instead, he was out working in the white stuff.

Laurie, the superintendent at Old Brockway Golf Course in Kings Beach, Calif., oversaw the rental of snowmobiles to tourists looking for a little winter fun. The snowmobiles are allowed to run in a loop starting down the left side of hole No. 1. Riders roar out toward the first green, turn around at the ropes and return down the right side of the fairway.

As a superintendent, Laurie knows the snowmobiles hurt the turf agronomically. The weight of the machines compacts the snow and creates a layer of impermeable ice in the upper soil profile. This leads to suffocation of the turf and prevents gaseous exchanges. When the snow melts, Laurie must aerify, seed, irrigate and compost excessively just to overcome the detrimental effects of the snowmobiles.

But he doesn't mind. The snowmobile business makes him the only year-round maintenance employee at Old Brockway. When he's not renting snowmobiles, he's doing other chores, such as removing trees, rebuilding equipment, maintaining golf cars and doing paper work.

With the arrival of spring, Laurie looks forward to the return of assistant superintendent Mo Mailhot and mechanic Ron Cochran. Three greenkeepers also return from Mexico to help Laurie maintain the course during golf season.

The snowmobile business has sure helped Laurie turn a tool more efficiently. He says he's become a much better mechanic than he ever anticipated.

*Craig F. Zellers is a Toro Golf Irrigation sales representative for Turf Star in California. In a previous life, he was a superintendent.*

## Quotable

**"One of the greatest football games I ever played happened when I was 9 years old. I scored 51 touchdowns and had more than 500 yards rushing against Nicky."**

— Rocky Bleier, former Pittsburgh Steeler running back, recalling a one-on-one football game against his childhood friend during his keynote address at the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference & Show in March.

**"That show was just hectic."**

— Irrigation consultant Dave Davis on getting around at the sizable Golf Industry Show.

**"Hooters has signed golfer John Daly to an endorsement contract. The restaurant chain believes it has finally found an athletic spokesman who can credibly claim that he really does go to Hooters for the wings."**

— Pete McEntergart of SI.com on Daly's diet.

**"Except during the nine months before he draws his first breath, no man manages his affairs as well as a tree does."**

— Playwright George Bernard Shaw on trees.

**"This morning the course was in perfect shape. Then Mother Nature had to go and mess it up."**

— Fred Klauk, superintendent of the TPC at Sawgrass, on the Friday afternoon after play was suspended during the rain-soaked Players Championship in March (pgatour.com).



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"Our message resonated well at the show," Den Gardner, executive director for Project EverGreen, said. "Many industry leaders I spoke with strongly identified with the need to further educate consumers about the positive impact golf course green spaces can have on their community."

#### **Regal Chemical founder dies**

James (Jim) O. King, the founder of Regal Chemical Co. and one of the great pioneers in the turf industry, died Feb. 26 at age 82.

In 1970, after leaving Diamond Shamrock, King formed Regal Chemical in Alpharetta, Ga. At the time, there was a need for better products, information and service in the golf and turf industry.

#### **Jacobsen takes control of Carolinas**

Golf Courses in North Carolina and South Carolina will now get their Jacobsen equipment and service directly from the company's headquarters in Charlotte, N.C.

Jacobsen TurfDirect will provide the states with direct shipments from the Jacobsen plant as well as parts straight from the factory. Services include next-day parts delivery upon request, factory assistance and internal service and diagnostics. The Carolinas had been serviced by G&S Turf Equipment and Jacobsen's Columbia branch.

## History in the Making

**DOROTHY DARROW HAS SERVED  
AS CLUBHOUSE MANAGER AT  
CHICAGO GOLF CLUB FOR 45 YEARS**

**By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief**



PHOTO BY: LARRY AYLWARD

**T**he first thing you notice about Dorothy Darrow is her demeanor. She wears a pleasant smile and offers a polite greeting. The affable Darrow is just the type of person a club would want as its clubhouse manager.

So it makes sense that Darrow has been the clubhouse manager at Chicago Golf Club for 45 years.

"I love it here, and that's why I'm still here," says Darrow, who says she's over 65 when asked her age. "It's home to me. I just feel so comfortable here."

Darrow jokingly refers to herself as the "relic" at Chicago Golf Club. One thing is for sure: Relic or not, Darrow is worth plenty, says certified superintendent Jon Jennings. "She has a schedule that would make anybody's schedule pale by comparison," Jennings adds.

Darrow's desk — it's a tad cluttered — is a testament to her daily agenda. Darrow, who began at the club in 1960, says 15 of the club's current members were there when she started.

"I've seen a lot of history here," she says of the club, which was built in 1893 and is the oldest 18-hole golf course in America.

Darrow works three days a week. She has lived in the same house for as long as she's worked at the club, which is about two miles from her home.

"I don't change much," says Darrow, a grandmother of five.

One reason Darrow has worked at the club for so long is because of its people. "Everybody is easy to work with," she says. "Very seldom does anyone complain."

Ditto for Darrow.

## Goldfdom to Join Questex Media Group

Questex Media Group Inc., a newly formed diversified business media publisher and event producer, has signed a definitive agreement to acquire five key divisions of *Goldfdom's* parent company, Advanstar Communications, including the portfolio group, which publishes *Goldfdom*.

Questex will serve multiple industries in the golf and landscape markets — as well as the technology, beauty, travel, hospitality, leisure and home entertainment industries — through a range of established publi-

cations, events, interactive media and integrated marketing services. The company's properties include 23 business-to-business publications, 50 Web sites and 25 conferences and tradeshow, generating revenues of more than \$100 million annually. Questex will employ more than 400 people in offices throughout North America, South America, Asia and Europe.

"This is an extremely positive development for our magazine," *Goldfdom* Publisher Pat Roberts said. "Moving

forward, we now have a unique opportunity to further develop and grow *Goldfdom* and its ancillary products using the extensive resources of the Questex Media Group. Both Questex and *Goldfdom* are committed to maintaining the magazine's position in the golf course maintenance industry and providing new opportunities for our advertisers and readers."

For more information, contact Roberts at 440-891-2609 or Larry Aylward, editor in chief, at 440-891-2770.



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With his son on the road most every week visiting distributors, Manny is the man when it comes to sales. But he doesn't seem overwhelmed by the pressure.

"My biggest asset in the sales business is my enthusiasm," says Manny, who worked for Kraft Foods and Alliant Foods in his previous career. "When I like a product, I get enthusiastic about it and I'm able to sell it."

David wouldn't want anyone else in the sales position.

"We're best friends," he says. "Our relationship is stronger now than it has ever been."

Manny has no plans to re-retire. A colon cancer survivor, Manny is enjoying life and work.

"How long am I going to go?" he asks himself. "I'll go as long as I possibly can. I just enjoy it that much. I'm having a great time."



PHOTO COURTESY: BAYER ES

**T**he assistants recently gathered in Clayton, N.C., to learn a few things about being the head honchos.

Forty-two assistant golf course superintendents from North Carolina and South Carolina attended the 2005 Future Superintendents Academy at the Bayer Environmental Science Development and Training Center. The two-day program, sponsored by Bayer and Toro distributor Smith Turf & Irrigation, focused on personal growth and technical seminars.

Certified Superintendent George Thompson, director of grounds at the Country Club of North Carolina and

**TWO-DAY COURSE OFFERS  
TRAINING, INSPIRATION FOR  
FUTURE SUPERINTENDENTS**

a teacher at Sandhills Community College, told the group that self-discipline, communications skills, good health and networking are the keys to success in the business.

Other highlights included:

► Tips on grub control from Rick Brandenburg, a North Carolina State University entomologist.

► Test driving a multipurpose prototype of the Sandpro, a single body designed to handle 20 tools ranging from sand rakes to cart-path edgers.

► Developing a personality profile and receiving pointers on working with others who may approach challenges from a different perspective.

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