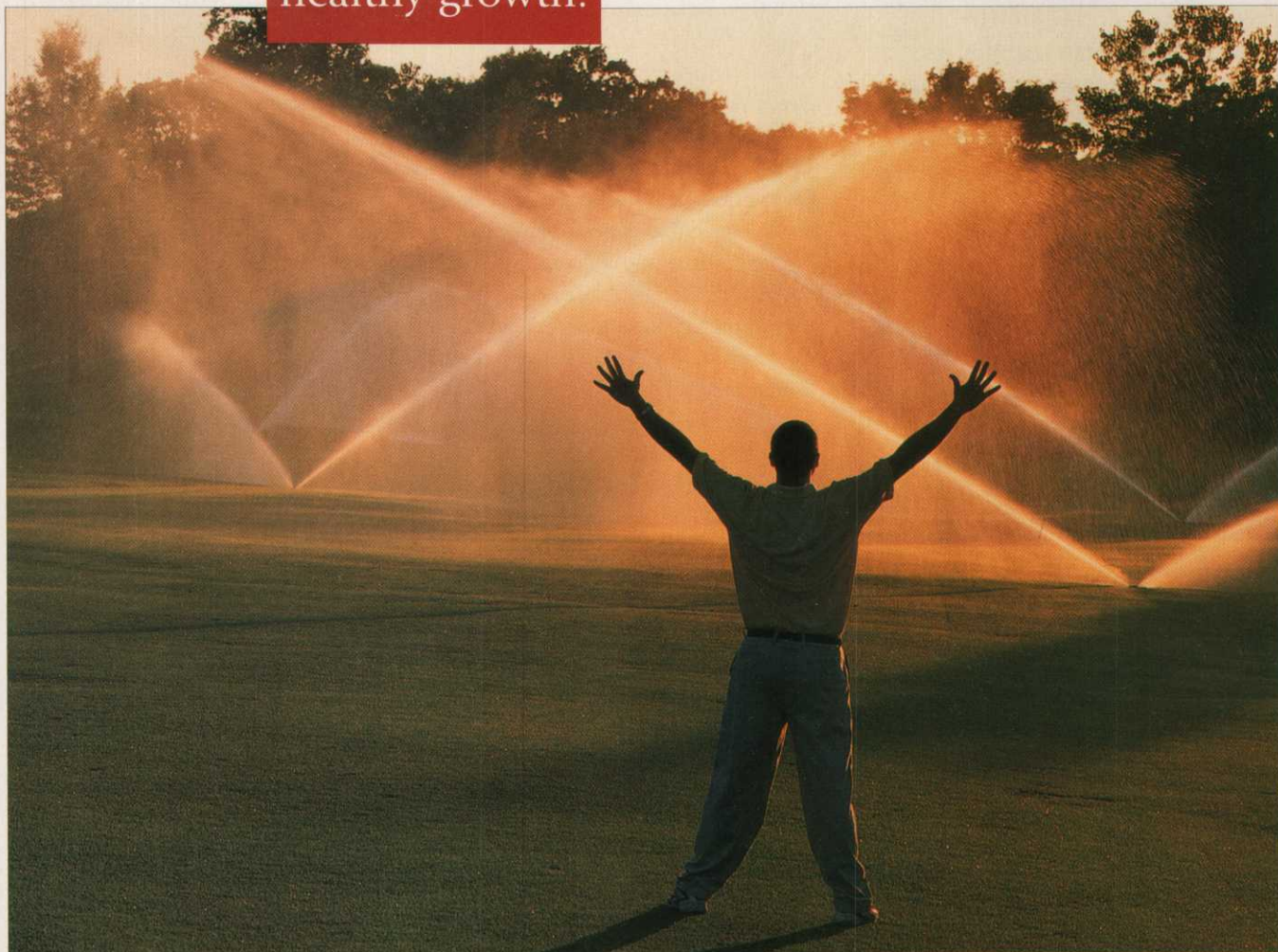


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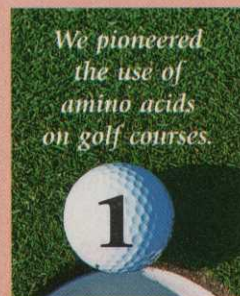
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Business briefs

Briefs continued from page 10

Deere announces year-end loss partially due to after-tax charges

Moline, Ill.-based Deere & Co. announced net losses of \$320.1 million (\$1.36 per share) for the fourth quarter and \$64 million (\$.27 per share) for the year ended Oct. 31. Affecting results for both periods were after-tax charges of \$216.6 million (\$.91 per share) related to the previously announced early retirement programs, the decision to exit the hand-held consumer products business and the restructuring of certain manufacturing and marketing operations.

Net sales in the commercial and consumer equipment division were down 23 percent for the quarter and 10 percent for the year, the company reported.

Owners can depreciate construction of greens

Golf courses can now claim the costs of modern golf green construction as depreciating assets under a new IRS rule, scheduled to apply to the 2002 tax season, according to the National Golf Course Owners Association.

The ruling, a boon to golf courses trying to make ends meet in tougher economic times, allows owners to depreciate the costs of modern greens and their drainage systems under current law and regulations as 15-year land improvement.

Who's No. 1?

TORO, TEXTRON REACT TO DEERE'S CLAIM

At last summer's John Deere Classic, a PGA tournament held in Moline, Ill., John Deere's CEO, Hans Becker, sat down for an interview with a reporter from *Golf* magazine. As the interview ended, Becker noted that Deere was the No. 1 equipment supplier to the golf course maintenance industry.

What do Toro and Textron think of such a confident claim?

John Wright, director of marketing for Toro's golf business, said the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute gathers the only public numbers on how many pieces of outdoor equipment that all manufacturers sell combined.

"I know what my own numbers are," Wright said. "For Deere's claim to be correct by OPEI standards, there would have to be no Textron."

Textron, of course, is alive and well, thank you, and has its own feelings about Deere's claim. "We have the broadest, best and most complete line of golf and turf maintenance products in the world," said Gregory Hyland, Textron's chairman and CEO during a press gathering in October. "We are the leader or a close No. 2 in most product categories."

When reminded of similar statements by his competitors, Hyland added with a smile, "Toro and Deere are just blowing smoke."

Deere, however, stands by its claim.

"By looking at other manufacturers' published reports, we determined that we had attained a leadership position in golf course equipment sales worldwide," said Ken Edwards, recently retired director of marketing and sales for John Deere Golf & Turf Products. "When we say 'golf course equipment,' we are referring to the equipment used in everyday maintenance operations."

Does the national company ranking matter to superintendents? Sean Remington, superintendent at Green Valley CC in Lafayette Hill, Pa., says he doesn't think most superintendents worry about them.

"They're all making quality products," Remington says. "It all boils down to the service and support you get at a local level, not what happens on a national level."

— Frank H. Andorka Jr., Managing Editor

"Toro and Deere are just blowing smoke."

A smiling Gregory Hyland, Textron's chairman/CEO

Witt: I Don't Think I Left Anything on the Table

*Golf*dom asked Tommy Witt, certified superintendent of Kiawah Island Club in Kiawah Island, S.C., to reflect on his one-year term as GCSAA president. Witt wraps up his tenure next month.

Take it away, Tommy:

"This has been a challenging year beyond the Sept. 11th tragedy. The slowdown in the economy certainly has affected many as-



Tommy Witt

pects of the association. The Sept. 11 horror dramatically affected the manner in which business and travel will influence GCSAA functions.

"I will walk away from my GCSAA experience and presidency knowing I gave my absolute best, and I hope that superintendents are bet-

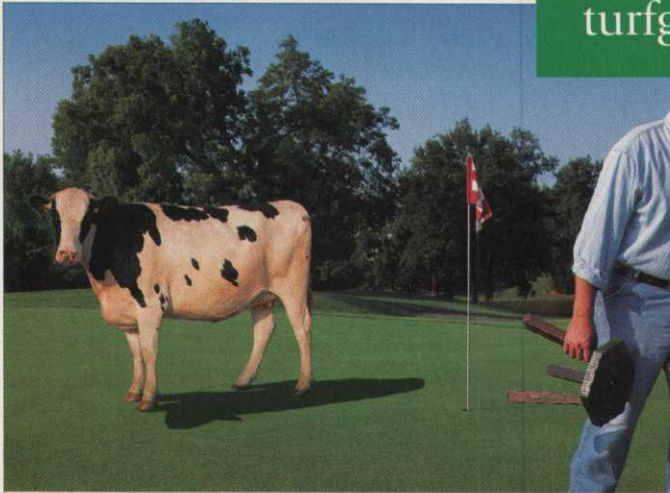
ter off today than when I joined the board eight years ago.

"I don't think I left anything on the

table. I did my very best each year to be one of nine contributing and participating board members to serve GCSAA.

"The GCSAA president, while charged with leading the association, is still just one member of the board. The president can accomplish nothing alone. I had eight talented men on the board, hundreds of committee members, and a great 120 GCSAA staff members helping me every day."

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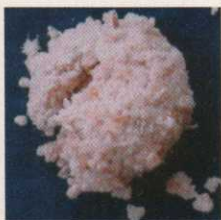
Off The Fringe

Hit It in the Drink ... and Feed the Fish

If a golfer uses the new ball from Eco Golf, he'll never technically lose another golf ball if he hits it in the drink. He will, however, dissolve a ball.

That's right. Eco Golf, manufacturer of the Eco Golf Tee, has developed a golf ball that will dissipate safely in water.

Eco Golf says its new ball looks, feels and flies like a real golf ball, but it's made from 100 percent natural materials. The ball degrades in three to five days, leaving no synthetic or toxic residue behind. The Eco ball is a one-piece, compression-molded ball. It flies about 75 percent the distance of a regular golf ball.



The Eco Golf Ball after being submerged in water for 96 hours.

The company claims that driving golf balls into the ocean was a favorite pastime of many cruise-line passengers (who often double as golfers), but the "sport" is prohibited. With Eco Golf's dissolving balls, driving ranges can return to cruise ships.

"Hitting golf balls into the ocean is an adrenaline rush similar to skipping stones into a lake," says Todd Baker, managing director for Eco Golf. "There is something special about watching the splash down of your ball plunging deep into the ocean and then turning to your friends and giving them all high fives."

Well, we don't get *that* excited about it.

Quotable

"Shirley Temples!"

— Bill Tryon, announcing how he and his son, Ty, would celebrate after Ty, 17, became the youngest player in history to earn a PGA Tour card. (Associated Press)

"The job superintendents have done is the biggest improvement in golf today. The demands have caused it, yes, but also the education that superintendents have now in agronomy and such (is critical)."

— Byron Nelson, Hall of Fame professional golfer (GCSAA)

"I don't recall that slow play was a problem in recreational golf until the average golfer had the bad example of the PGA Tour on television."

— Frank Hannigan, former USGA executive director. (Doug Ferguson, Associated Press)



Scanning the Web

Frank Andorka reviews puttingzone.com/gk.html

(All sites are preceded by <http://> unless otherwise noted)

You could call this site the "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Putting Greens and Weren't Afraid to Ask" site. Although the overall site is dedicated to the fine art of putting, you could easily spend hours perusing the "greenkeepers" section.

Its subjects are too extensive to list completely here, but the site discusses everything from green construction to irrigation practices and beyond. The most impressive part of the site is the navigation bar on the right-hand side, which lists journal and magazine articles about the

subject you choose from the main menu.

The list of article authors is equally impressive. It includes the USGA's Jim Snow, Penn State University's Al Turgeon and noted architect Mike Hurdzan, just to name a few. If I had to quibble, the links should take you directly to the articles rather than abstracts.

Armed with the extensive abstract information, however, you should be able to find actual copies of the articles on your own. It's such a good site, in fact, that I'm going to add it to our list of links at www.golfdom.com.

Speaking of our Web site, *Golfdom* has completely redesigned it to make it more user-friendly and current. We've included a new search engine and a navigation bar that will help you find the articles you need quickly. We're still tweaking it a bit, so if you have any questions or concerns don't hesitate to contact me at fandorka@advanstar.com. Thanks for giving us another shot.

Golfdom's managing editor Frank H. Andorka Jr. compiles *Scanning the Web* and is thrilled about the upgrades to *Golfdom's* site, www.golfdom.com. You can reach him at fandorka@advanstar.com with future column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.



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CIRCLE NO. 109



He Needs a Golf Script

'HOOSIERS' STAR SHELVES PGA CAREER TO RETURN TO ACTING

By Larry Aylward, Editor

It makes sense that Maris Valainis, the actor who portrayed high-school basketball phenom Jimmy Chitwood in the 1986 film *Hoosiers*, could star as a rookie golfer on the verge of helping the United States win the Ryder Cup. Valainis, after all, can hit greens like he hit jump shots in *Hoosiers*, one of the all-time great sports flicks.

The stage is set for that to happen. The 37-year-old Valainis, a scratch golfer, was recently laid off from his job as golf pro and general manager of Rancho San Joaquin GC in Irvine, Calif., and returned to acting. Valainis has an agent and is looking for work.

Remember the pivotal scene in *Hoosiers* when Chitwood's coach, Norman Dale (Gene Hackman), calls the final play with the 1952 Indiana state basketball crown on the line? His team, the Hickory Huskers, is down by one with only seconds left. Dale tells the players they're going to use their star player, Chitwood, as a decoy and someone else is going to take the last shot. Then Chitwood lifts his head, looks his

coach squarely in the eyes and says, "I'll make it." If you're a *Hoosiers* fan, you know the rest of the story.

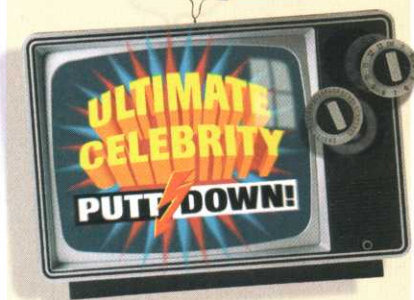
Can't you see a cool and collective Valainis starring in a similar role as a golfer? There he is, lining up a 40-foot putt to win the Ryder Cup. He turns to his nerve-wracked teammates and whispers, "I'll make it."

Valainis, who grew up in Indianapolis, started out as a golfer, not an actor. The golf bug bit when he was 8 years old when he and his brother began caddy and playing. His passion for the game explains his 1-handicap.

But Valainis' life changed when he was a college student in Indianapolis in the mid-'80s. He was playing hoops on a Monday night at a local school when the casting director for *Hoosiers* spotted him and asked him to audition for a role. Valainis had no acting experience, but he could shoot the rock.

He excelled in his role as Chitwood, and *Hoosiers* was a hit. Hence, the acting bug bit Valainis, who moved to California and had bit parts in a few films and TV shows before quitting the

What's on your TV?



You gave up watching *Emeril* after that last flambé claimed your toupee and *Hometime* because you discovered beer and electricity don't mix. The only thing left to watch is a good round of golf. According to GCSAA, here's how superintendents rank the best pro tournaments to catch on TV:

Masters	53%
U.S. Open	20%
Ryder Cup	11%
British Open	10%
PGA Championship	2%
Skins Game	1%
TPC Championship	1%
Other	2%

ILLUSTRATION: DAN BEEDY

Hollywood scene and returning to golf.

In the early '90s, Valainis took a job as the head pro and assistant manager at Casta del Sol GC in Mission Viejo. He spent the last few years at Rancho San Joaquin GC.

Valainis says he treasures his golf career, and he holds superintendents in high regard. "They're some of the most important people at golf courses," he says.

Valainis still laces up his Chuck Taylors and plays in local leagues. Sometimes other players look at him and say, "Aren't you Jimmy Chitwood?" PGA Tour player Mike Sposa told Valainis he watches *Hoosiers* to inspire him if he's in contention in a tournament.

Valainis isn't tired of the attention and loves to talk about *Hoosiers*, which he says is the *The Wizard of Oz* of sports films.

Memo to Hollywood: Send Valainis a good golf script.



ORION PICTURES

Maris Valainis (back row, second from left) excelled as Jimmy Chitwood in the movie *Hoosiers*. But what he'd really like now is a golf role, since the game is his first love.

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FROM



Meeet the new boss . . . same as the old boss. I mean that in a good way, though. Next month, Mike Wallace, certified superintendent of Hop Meadow CC in Simsbury, Conn., takes over as GCSAA president. Wallace succeeds Tommy Witt, certified superintendent of Kiawah Island Club in Kiawah Island, S.C.

Wallace says GCSAA will get a guy who's nothin' fancy. Like Witt, Wallace just wants to do the right thing and be there for members. "There's nothing that's going to be big and flashy because Mike Wallace isn't a big and flashy guy," Wallace says.

Surely, Witt didn't present himself as big and flashy. He seemed genuinely interested in *all* superintendents' concerns, and that's not easy. When's the last time a leader of an organization from any field tried to satisfy everyone's interests?

Take the Professional Development Initiative, for instance. Witt began his tenure last February when the disputed PDI — GCSAA's program to upgrade standards for superintendents to make them more competent and marketable — was voted in by superintendents. But the controversy surrounding PDI, which created a great debate among superintendents, didn't end after it passed. It's still an issue, especially since it doesn't take effect until July 2003.

When PDI became a topic of discussion on the GCSAA Web site's Talking It Over forum, Witt was there to chat — and he didn't take a hardline approach. Last February, shortly after the GCSAA show, a superintendent posted a message about his concern over losing his Class A status because PDI requirements meant he would miss more work and spend more of the course's money to attend seminars. (Under PDI, Class A superintendents are subject to meet ongoing requirements to keep their status.)

It took Witt less than four hours to respond to the superintendent's post. Witt offered guidance about the alternative ways to achieve the required education so the superintendent wouldn't have to miss much work or spend much money. Witt didn't come across as a

Wallace Picks Up Where Witt Left Off

BY LARRY AYLWARD



"THERE'S NOTHING THAT'S GOING TO BE BIG AND FLASHY BECAUSE MIKE WALLACE ISN'T A BIG AND FLASHY GUY," THE NEW PRESIDENT SAYS

company man — he came across as a concerned peer. That's exactly what Wallace wants to be.

Wallace, who was appointed to GCSAA's board of directors in 1995, realizes that PDI will continue to be an issue under his leadership. Like Witt, he's not about to tell troubled superintendents to get over it.

"[PDI] is a change, and there's always going to be concern with change," Wallace says. "It's a normal human reaction."

Under his jurisdiction, Wallace vows to keep PDI moving toward its implementation date — and to make sure it can be beneficial to as many superintendents as possible.

"We want to have a seamless transition in 2003," Wallace says. "To do that, we must get PDI's infrastructure in place."

"We are the proverbial duck on the pond," Wallace continues. "The top is moving steadily ahead, but our legs are paddling like the dickens to get everything in its proper place."

Wallace is aware of superintendents' concerns of having to travel and miss work to obtain points to retain their Class A status. He says it's GCSAA's goal to be "more accessible and affordable" in education.

"We're in the process of evaluating all the educational opportunities," Wallace says. "Superintendents will find they can satisfy their educational needs without doing a lot of traveling."

Wallace takes over the GCSAA presidency at a difficult time. The economy is hurting, and the golf industry has felt the financial pinch.

"The economy is a concern as we go forward," Wallace says. "We will look at all of our programs and evaluate them."

"The golf industry is going to be challenged," he adds. "We're not going to climb out of this recession within the next few months."

Continued on page 20

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CIRCLE NO. 111

Pin High

Continued from page 18

We're in for a tough haul, and we have to recognize that."

Wallace says he'll do his part by spending the association's money frugally. If he decides a speaking engagement on the West Coast doesn't warrant the expenditure for him to go, he'll try to find someone closer to the location to cover for him. "I'm looking for a return on investment for the association and myself," Wallace states.

Ironically, Wallace is yet another GCSAA president who will seek a new job shortly after stepping into the presidency. The last was 2000 GCSAA president Scott Woodhead, who left his job during his tenure. Wallace will leave Hop Meadow on March 31 because he was told his contract would not be renewed. If he can't find another job within six months, he'll have to resign as GCSAA president.

It may look strange to outsiders,



"THE INDUSTRY IS GOING TO BE CHALLENGED. WE'RE NOT GOING TO CLIMB OUT OF THIS RECESSION WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS."

Mike Wallace, incoming GCSAA president

but Wallace says the number of GCSAA presidents who have lost their jobs is no big deal.

"Coincidences happen," says Wallace, who has been at Hop Meadow since 1985. "Look at the statistics. Most superintendents move on every five years."

Wallace says the split from Hop Meadow is amicable, but he admits his contract was not renewed because a small group of golfers didn't agree with his management style. Wallace acts like he knew it was coming.

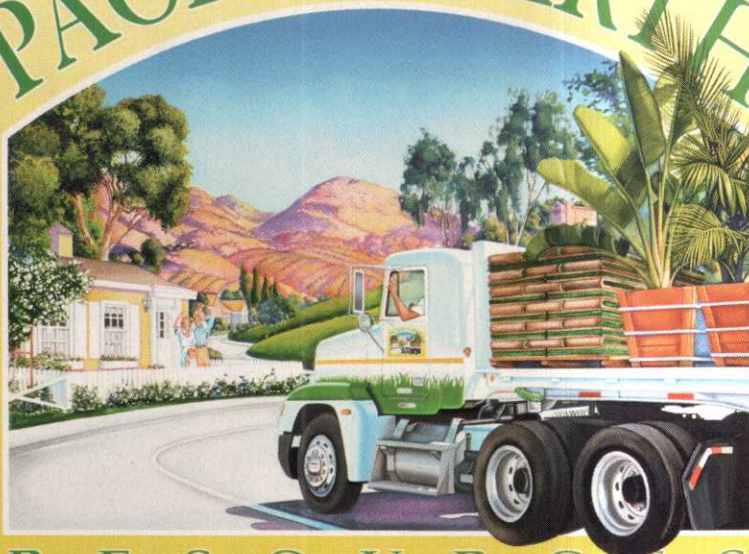
"I'm looking for work," Wallace says. "I have my résumés out."

What will a golf course get in Wallace? A modest man, for one thing.

"I get up in the morning, tie my shoelaces like anyone else and go to work to do the best job I can with the knowledge I have," Wallace says. "And I'm always looking to gain more knowledge."

Golfdom Editor Larry Aylward can be reached at 440-891-2770 or laylward@advanstar.com.

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