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N.G.A. BEST BAGGER TITLE GOES TO INDIANA WOMAN

Replacement for Marine Called to Active Duty Wins for Martin's Super Market

ARLINGTON, Virginia (Feb. 12, 2003) — Darcie Berndt, representing Martin's Super Markets (Indiana), won the title of 2003 Best Bagger at the National Grocers Association (N.G.A.) annual convention in Las Vegas last week. The 17th annual tournament was held at the Mirage Hotel on Feb. 4.

Berndt replaced Dan Miller, the original winner from Indiana and another Martin's associate, when he was called to active duty in the marines. Miller is currently in California awaiting orders to depart for the Middle East. Berndt received \$2,000, a bag-shaped trophy and the chance to be in a major motion picture. She won the title by placing 35 items in two paper bags and then the same items in three plastic bags in 55 seconds.

"It was a great opportunity to compete in this tournament for myself and to represent Dan," said Berndt. "I am proud to bring this title home to Martin's."

Berndt competed with 23 other finalists for the crown. Five finalists advanced to the championship round, where the competition narrowed the field to a champion. Danny Jones, representing Macey's-Sandy (Utah), finished second, followed by Sarah Davis, representing Publix Supermarkets (Alabama). Susan Higley of Martin's Super Markets (Michigan) finished fourth and Alex Taber of Nugget Markets (California) finished fifth. Each of the finalists received a bag-shaped trophy. The second place finisher received \$1,000, while the other finalists each received \$500. All participants received certificates and aprons. N.G.A. also presented a trophy in absentia to Dan Miller.

"Once again, we were very pleased with the level of competition at the event," said Tom Zaucha, N.G.A. President and CEO. "Darcie won this for herself, her store and Dan, her colleague who has been called upon to defend his country and our freedom. We are very proud of all our participants and all the young men and women like Dan who are defending our country."

The Best Bagger contest was sponsored by the Campbell Sales Company. Associate sponsors were the American Popcorn Company, B&G Foods, Bertolli USA, Inc., Pepperidge Farm, Inc., Plochman, Inc., and Welch Foods, Inc. Raley's Supermarkets of Sacramento once again provided the judging and organizational support for the competition. Following the event, all of the products used were donated to the Food Bank of Greater Las Vegas.

N.G.A. is the national trade association representing the retail and wholesale grocers that comprise the independent sector of the food distribution industry. An independent retailer is a privately owned or controlled food retail company operating in a variety of formats. Some are publicly traded but with controlling shares held by the family and others are employee owned. Most independent operators are serviced by wholesale distributors, while others may be partially or fully self-distributing. Independents are the true "entrepreneurs" of the grocery industry and dedicated to their customers, associates, and communities. N.G.A. members include retail and wholesale grocers and their state associations, as well as manufacturers and service suppliers.

