 recovering toward full-service, destination resorts. You may have gathered I'm not a big fan of organized gambling, which tends to separate cash from the pockets of those who, in general, can least afford to lose. However, it's impossible to ignore the bright side here, which is the huge potential growth for golf.

The game has long been a favorite of resort developers who must occupy vacationers during daylight hours. Unlike seaside resorts, most Indian reservations have no beach component — making golf even more important to providing outdoor activities.

Golf developers who've spent the last 10 years wading through seas of red may finally be salivating uncontrollably at the idea of building courses on land unregulated by local laws. Land on Indian reservations is often plentiful and, because the tribe owns it outright, beyond cheap.

Don't get me wrong: There is money to be made here as golf rides the coat tails of this burgeoning trend. But, developers beware: There are pitfalls that shouldn't be underplayed (see story page 33).

The temptation — as it was in the late-1980s with regard to real estate-based developments — is to seize immediately upon this new golf vehicle before the competition does.

Yet the family-style gaming theme park is not a proven commodity.

Knotts' call for return to classic design a worthy crusade

In the beginning: Brown. Unmanicured. Unruly. Not bound by rules beyond a tee box, a green and a cup. This is what golf courses were made of.

Today: Green — always green. Grass smooth as a billiard table and fast as a speeding bullet. Holes in multiples of nine. Well-defined. No blind shots. Never (well, hardly ever) two consecutive par-3s. Never (well, hardly ever) two consecutive par-5s. Contrived. This is what golf courses are made of.

Such is the Tale of The Prodigal — The Prodigal Golf Nation, that is. Just as the United States is an evolving analogy of the prodigal son, is not golf as we know it today, at many facilities and in many ways, an analogy of the prodigal son?

Just as the prodigal son left his roots to frolic in the (Egads!) pig sty, the game has long been a favorite of resort developers who have narrowed the concept of a golf course to, effect, rule out the very classics from which golf grew.

In the end, the prodigal son saw the light. He realized the error of his ways, how they led to his destruction. His father welcomed him back home with outstretched arms. The sentinels of Golf Nation would do the same to our own prodigal — wouldn't you say?

He has been called sinister, diabolical (or was that "dy-ab-OH-lic") and, a savage envisioner of nightmares for golfers. But those who know him, love him. Next winter they can know him better.

Golf course architect extraordinaire Pete Dye, not to be outdone by his designer/buddies buddies, is coming out with his own book in November (see story, page 32). What will Pete title it? "Bury Me in a Pot Bunker." Appropriate enough. Word is, Pete is leaning toward the subtitle "Holes That Changed the Course; How about "Bury My Heart (or Driver or Putter) in Crooked Stick" — or "Spitting Upwind in the Teeth of the Dog?" Any ideas?

Meanwhile, the prodigal is returning into the world of clothing design. The Bowie, Md., firm Membership Bounce has announced its Pete Dye Aircraft Series golf shirts, which will consist of signed interpretations of newly created golf courses. His trademark — island

More letters on opposite page

Letters

TORO RESEARCHER ANSWERS WALL STREET JOURNAL REPORT

To the editor:

Your May 2 Marketplace article, "Golf Courses Are Now a Health Hazards" did a great disservice to the golf industry as well as the emerging group of environmentalists working to help golf courses. Many golf superintendents are working to pioneer new management techniques.

Virtually every superintendent will agree that the turf management practices used on a golf course need to evolve as our understanding of the environmental implications of our turf-care practices.

The new breed of turf nutrition companies is emerging. Their programs use the natural balance in the turf to control infestations and promote improved playability and aesthetics. Turf grass is a living plant. Don Knott of Robert Trent Jones II International, has proclaimed this return to the classics as his Number One Call to Duty. Why nine holes, or 18 holes when the land you're dealing with is too small? He asks. Why always have lush green turf? He asks. Why,

courses environmentally safe for their players, crews and communities.

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