TURLOCK GREENS REMODELED

TURLOCK, Calif. — Remodeling of the greens has begun at Turlock Golf & Country Club under the design supervision of architect Andy Raugust. The back nine were scheduled to be completed by late February and ready for play in early spring. The club is scheduled for the fall.

BARBARON BUILDING PRACTICE FACILITY

OCALA, Fla. — Barbaron, Inc. of Crystal River has been selected to construct the new practice facility at Oak Run Country Club under the design supervision of architect Andy Raugust. The facility will include a driving range with target greens and bunkering and will include chipping and putting areas and practice bunkers. Oak Run is owned by Decca Development & Construction Corp. of America.

MAKI BUSY ON TWOfronts

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Construction is underway on an 18-hole, daily-fee golf course here, serving as a cornerstone of a residential housing development. Fox Chase Plantation is the creation of octogenarian Joe F. Day, while the course is being built by Bilberry Golf and designed by Lisa Maki of Golf Design Services International. The par-72 course will measure 7,100 from the back tees. Meanwhile, Maki expects to begin work in April on Eagles Nest in Sacramento, Calif., south of the U.S. Air Force’s base. The course architect Geoffrey S. Cornish of the Caribana family of Barbados and the Bahamas are two successful insurance agent here. Little did Maki know that he had written a manuscript shortly before his death but that it had never been published. Whittem called Charles Scribner and Sons in New York, inquired about the unpublished work and was told it had “long since disappeared.” An unfortunate deed-end, to say the least.

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Construction is underway on an 18-hole, daily-fee golf course here, serving as a cornerstone of a residential housing development. Fox Chase Plantation is the creation of octogenarian Joe F. Day, while the course is being built by Bilberry Golf and designed by Lisa Maki of Golf Design Services International. The par-72 course will measure 7,100 from the back tees. Meanwhile, Maki expects to begin work in April on Eagles Nest in Sacramento, Calif., south of the U.S. Air Force’s base. The course architect Geoffrey S. Cornish of the Caribana family of Barbados and the Bahamas are two successful insurance agent here. Little did Maki know that he had written a manuscript shortly before his death but that it had never been published. Whittem called Charles Scribner and Sons in New York, inquired about the unpublished work and was told it had “long since disappeared.” An unfortunate deed-end, to say the least.

Mackenzie's mysterious manuscript

BY TERRY BUCHE

OULDER, Colo. — Raymund Haddock, the step-grandson of Dr. Alister Mackenzie, is a successful insurance agent here. Little did he know that his life was going to change dramatically with the discovery of an item stored for years in a cedar chest in his home.

The story begins in 1978 when course architect Geoffrey S. Cornish and writer Ron Whitten were researching their book, “The Golf Course,” and discovered in Dr. Mackenzie’s obituary that he had written a manuscript shortly before his death but that it had never been published. Whittem, who was considered to be the key manuscript, had the manuscript and had returned it to Trent Jones. But Jones insisted that Hoffman still had it, and it was never to be seen again. Another dear-end.

In 1982 Robert Trent Jones Sr. told Whittem he had a typed version of the lost manuscript which he had given to the legendary Red Hoffman. Whittem called Hoffman, who insisted that he no longer had the manuscript and had returned it to Trent Jones. But Jones insisted that Hoffman still had it, and it was never to be seen again. Another dear-end.

Fast-forward 10 years to 1992. The Mackenzie Cup was being played between four 10-man teams representing Cypress Point, Meadow Club, Green Hills, Pasatiempo, The Valley Club and Crystal Downs. At a gathering in the garden of Mackenzie’s house along the 6th fairway at Pasatiempo, Whittem told the golfers that 60 years later it was difficult to research Mackenzie. In particular, he was back in 1936. Since then, he has designed and remodeled courses throughout the United States and notably Mexico (see story above). The engineer’s attention to detail demonstrated itself in his invention of the Percrometer, a device used for the job control of seed-bed preparation for greens. Priding himself on getting projects in on time and on budget, he also wrote one of the first books dealing with the costs of course design. "The Business End of Building or Rebuilding a Golf Course," in 1973.

Golf Course News: You supposedly retired from active design work in 1990. What have you been doing since?

Joe Finger: Working my rear end off. I’ve built two courses in Mexico, have two more on the drawing board and one up in the air. We remodeled the greens at Cedar Ridge in Tulsa [Okla.] and Colonial Country Club in Memphis [Tenn.]. We’re doing a long-range plan for Pleasant Valley CC in Little Rock [Ark.], which we built for Winthrop Rockefeller 27 years ago. We also did consulting work on the Napa Valley [Calif.] CC clubhouse. I’m doing a lot of gardening and orcharding at home and working for the club [River Hill]. Byron Nelson and I built River Hill back in 1974 and we both have homes back in 1936. Since then, he has designed and remodeled courses throughout the United States and notably Mexico (see story above). The engineer’s attention to detail demonstrated itself in his invention of the Percrometer, a device used for the job control of seed-bed preparation for greens. Priding himself on getting projects in on time and on budget, he also wrote one of the first books dealing with the costs of course design. "The Business End of Building or Rebuilding a Golf Course," in 1973.

Golf Course News: You supposedly retired from active design work in 1990. What have you been doing since?

Joe Finger: Working my rear end off. I’ve built two courses in Mexico, have two more on the drawing board and one up in the air. We remodeled the greens at Cedar Ridge in Tulsa [Okla.] and Colonial Country Club in Memphis [Tenn.]. We’re doing a long-range plan for Pleasant Valley CC in Little Rock [Ark.], which we built for Winthrop Rockefeller 27 years ago. We also did consulting work on the Napa Valley [Calif.] CC clubhouse. I’m doing a lot of gardening and orcharding at home and working for the club [River Hill]. Byron Nelson and I built River Hill back in 1974 and we both have homes back in 1936. Since then, he has designed and remodeled courses throughout the United States and notably Mexico (see story above). The engineer’s attention to detail demonstrated itself in his invention of the Percrometer, a device used for the job control of seed-bed preparation for greens. Priding himself on getting projects in on time and on budget, he also wrote one of the first books dealing with the costs of course design. "The Business End of Building or Rebuilding a Golf Course," in 1973.
Discouraged but not 'down and out' in Mexico

Continued from page 39

The peso roughly 40 percent in mid-January, making imports of American-made maintenance equipment more expensive and bringing development virtually to a stop.

"It hasn't discouraged development interest in Mexico," said Andy O'Brien of Jack Nicklaus Golf Services, which has opened three Mexican projects and has a fourth in planning. "They may modify the way they finance projects, but we haven't seen a noticeable change. It's still a real active market.

Don Rhodes of NationsBank said Mexico's financial plight is a reminder of the difficulty traditional lenders have making deals in developing countries.

"It's almost impossible to get a first mortgage on a property because of the fear officials have of foreigners coming in and taking over prime property if the borrower should default," Rhodes said. "About the only way for a U.S. lender to get involved in Mexico is through a joint venture agreement with the lender basically putting up a few million dollars to set up some native Mexicans in business.

"The only way you would do something like that is if you were interested in making a long-term commitment to a country. U.S. investors were already waiting to see if the NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] rules would stabilize the investment climate in Mexico. This recent financial setback will just make investors rethink any long-term investments."

Mexican golf course development has experienced steady growth in recent years. There are approximately 150 golf courses in the country with eight opening in 1994, according to Mexican Golf Federation figures. Americans will get a look at one of the finest, Cabo del Sol, when the year-old Nicklaus layout on the southern tip of the Baja peninsula hosts the Senior Tour's Grand Slam March 6-7.

But, that yearly growth figure will be tough to duplicate in 1995 considering the peso's fall, said Victor Frangie of the Mexico Golf Association.

"Everything has come to a stop," he said.

Frangie and Finger are confident about the long-term future, however. "I foresee a steady rate into additional courses, Finger said.

"The west coast is saturated with resorts," he said, "and the federal government can't afford the infrastructure to build more. Puerto Vallarta, for instance, has way too many hotels. There are five courses in Baja, Calif. I have two, Nicklaus two and Roy Dye one. But I don't think there's enough water for the five of them."

"The east coast has room for some additional development, like Cozumel and the Yucatan. But the east is less popular because the lack of sea breezes makes it hotter and more humid than the west."

On the other hand, Finger sees a growing demand for residential development courses, particularly in suburban cities surrounding Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey.

"One of the most maddening things for me is the way the press depicts Mexico," Finger said. "It is not a Third World country with a few very rich and a bunch of very poor people. It has steel and car manufacturers. And there's a growing middle class of doctors, lawyers, architects and business owners.

"But the big cities are very polluted. Many are on high plateaus and don't have winds to clear out the smog. People are fleeing the inner cities and are willing to move an hour's drive away. Some think two hours is even better. It's not unusual for a father to work in the city and live in an apartment during the week, then commute the two hours back home on the weekend."

"Queretaro is a two-hour drive from Mexico City and already has four courses. Cuernavaca and other areas south of Mexico City are being developed. So is Tequila and beyond to the west. Mexican engineers and contractors are great at building new highways quickly so that commuters can reach those areas."

What is most needed in Mexico, Finger added, is low-cost municipal courses.

You deserve credit for helping
make the impossible possible

Creating and maintaining the perfect golf environment is a difficult task. Sometimes it seems almost impossible. Especially when you consider the tools, both physical and financial, needed to keep a course manicured.

At John Deere Credit, we understand the obstacles you face every day. That's why we offer a variety of equipment-related finance plans with terms to match your needs. Whether you need a lease for that new