NEWS IN BRIEF

FRESNO, Calif. — The long, sad decline at the Airways Golf Course may soon turn around. Earlier this fall, the city council voted 6-1 to enter into a 20-year agreement with GolfCorp. that includes plans for $1.6 million in capital improvements for the run-down, neglected 9-hole course near the airport. If all goes as planned, there will be a new clubhouse by January. Plans call for new maintenance and cart buildings, an automated irrigation system, and renovation of all greens, tees and bunkers.

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — The Gary Player Group has moved to 3900 RCA Boulevard, Suite 3001, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. 33410. Its phone numbers remain unchanged: 407-624-0300; Fax: 407-624-6304.

ROSS TOWNSHIP, Pa. — The 18-hole Highland Country Club here in this suburb of Pittsburgh may have been sabotaged with weed killer that turned the tees and putting greens brown and closed the course for weeks. The club’s grounds crew sprayed the tees and greens the morning of Aug. 2. A few days later, the sprayed areas turned brown. An analysis of the chemicals on the grass showed that weed killer had been used instead of the usual mixture of fertilizer and fungicide. Clubhouse manager Robert Duhon has filed a report with police.

DANVILLE, Ind. — Twin Bridges Golf Club is being developed by Heritage Golf Management, Inc., an Indianapolis-based development management and consulting company. Thomas H. Rodems, director of operations, has registered Twin Bridges to become part of The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. Designed by Lohmann Golf Designs, Inc. of Marengo, Ill., it’s expected to open in late fall of 1996.

No immediate future for long lost Tilly track

BY HAL PHILLIPS

JAMESTOWN, R.I. — It appears the long since overgrown Beaver Tail Golf Links, the only known example of a seaside A.W. Tillinghast design, will remain dormant.

An effort to restore the 9-hole layout and add another nine, designed by Steve Snyers, has been thwarted by the presence of wetlands on the site, which sits on Jamestown Island between Newport and the east coast of Narragansett Bay.

“We had trouble finding enough land that wasn’t wetlands,” said Stanley Abrams, head of Boston-based Senior Tour Development Co., which had an agreement to develop the parcel. “It wasn’t a problem 50 years ago. But some cascading ponds, which were built in 1925 and abandoned in 1945, are now considered wetlands.

“We could no longer find 18 holes there. We ended up with a 14-hole golf course, and there isn’t great demand for 14-hole golf courses.”

Mel Lucas, an agronomist who has walked the site, agrees with Abrams’ assessment:

“There are just so many things in there, all man-made and silted,” said Lucas. “I’m sure through the right methods and means, they could’ve been rebuilt and made acceptable to all parties, including the DEM [Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management], golfers, architects, you name it. But in a number of places, these water features had been so mucked up over time, it was more a rodent haven than a nice, pristine wetland.”

The Beaver Tail saga shows how much golf has changed over the course

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Beaver Tail, RIP?

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of 70 years. One thing remains constant, however: Beaver Tail occupies a stunning piece of land, nestled as it is on a corner of Jamestown Island with Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island Sound lapping against it. The original 18-hole course was opened for private play in 1926 — very private play. In fact, Tillinghast designed Beaver Tail for one man, owner Audley Clarke, on whose estate it was built.

Shortly after he christened the course, however, Clarke started leasing it to various management companies, who could never make it profitable. At that time, Jamestown Island was accessible only by ferry, and the Depression era didn’t help matters. Nine holes were eventually sold for housing and, when Clarke died in the 1940s, the situation went from bad to worse, culminating in the complete abandonment of the course operation in 1947.

There it stood, dormant and overgrown, until the early 1970s when a distant relative of Clarke’s, Robert Munro Clarke, became intrigued by this course in hibernation. Clarke the younger is not a golfer himself, but he became fascinated by the possibilities of reviving holes could be restored to profitability, if a new management company, who could

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Phillips comment

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tion tourney reaches the man on the street, while the firm’s backing of the GCSEA’s Environmental Steward Award is designed to create positive vibes in the turf market. There is new leadership here, as well. Senior Vice President Michael Kichly has succeeded Dick Tillinghast as head of the Professional Business Group.

• Then there’s the new kid on the block: United Horticultural Supply (UHS). This Aurora, Ore.-based firm has been around for a long time, but it has thrust itself into the fertilizer fray with its new temperature-sensitive, controlled-release product, ESN. “It’s been going real well,” reports Fertilizer Product Manager John Walther, “but we feel we still have a long way to go. Even the researchers need to...

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