Preserve golf course designs, Whitten urges

By Mark Leslie

PINEHURST, N.C. — Calling himself their No. 1 fan, Ron Whitten urged golf course architects to become "a Self-Preservation Society," preserving their work or facing the possibility of losing any record of it.

Accepting the Donald Ross Award from the American Society of Golf Course Architects, the Golf Digest and Golf World golf course architecture editor said: "Ten, 15, 25, 50 years from now — unless you leave a record behind — there will be no record of your architecture." He said that while plans on paper are subject to interpretation and deterioration and while computer disks can become obsolete and unreadable, black-and-white photographs keep the best record.

Take photos, he said, not of "calendar shots" but "from every angle, every bunker, every tee."

Pointing to great changes that have been made over the years to Cypress Point and Augusta National, Whitten said architects need to give clubs clues to their designs, "especially when 50 years down the road some club decides to undo 50 years worth of green committee damage. Maybe you don't care what clubs do to your designs after you leave the premises. But if you do, leave them a clue. In black and white."

He also urged the architects to never lose sight of the real purpose of golf course architecture. "It's more than just an art, more than just a science," Whitten said. "It's part of the huge global entertainment business. Golf course architecture is show biz."

continued on page 45

Q&A

Fream's world unhindered by distance or cultures

Ron Fream was in the midst of a master's degree program in turfgrass management at Washington State University in the United States in 1966 when he was lured away from PCDC headquarters, 920 Airport Road, Ste. 210, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514; 919-942-8922; fax 919-942-6955.

continued on page 46

Palmer & 8 title winners to design track

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer and eight other major tournament winners each will design two holes of a golf course to be built in Manila, Philippines.

The project was announced during the Bay Hill Invitational here on March 16 when Palmer Course Design Co. (PCDC) signed a single-day record of five new agreements for golf course architectural services. The record-setting day capped a record-setting month that saw nine new agreements.

continued on page 47

BOOK REVIEW

Ross' insights are plentiful, varied

By Mark Leslie

His fans are legion, yet they never met — never even saw the man. But his ideas continue to shape more than any other architect has ever designed — exude exuberance and fond recollections from aficionados who have played them.

There is even a fan club in his memory: The Donald Ross Society. Yet, what do we really know about Donald Ross? Until now, very little. He is the least-published among the great golf course architects. But with the publication of the latest commentaries of Donald Ross, the man and the designer is unveiled. "Golf Has Never Failed Me," compiled by Ron Whitten and published by Sleeping Bear Press for the American Society of Golf Course Architects, is due out May 25. Don't miss it!

This is an utterly fascinating book, loaded with many old photos never before made public — but, more importantly, seeping with insight into the all-time favorite golf course architect, a Brit who made America his home and transformed its land in the meantime.

Readers interested in Ross's ideas on golf course design and construction won't be disappointed (although they may find they were completely wrong about his ideas on earthmoving, blind shots, water hazards and other facets of design). But my favorite parts of the book are Ross's thoughts on other aspects of the game and those involved in it. To wit: "Greenkeeping is destined to

continued on page 48

May 1996 43