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."

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BOOK REVIEW

Donald Ross insights are plentiful, varied

BY MARK LESLIE

His fans are legion, yet they never met — never even saw the man.

But his ideas are still influencing golf course designers more than any other architect. Donald Ross has ever designed — exotic 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.

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, seeing 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:

("Greengrass is destined to..."

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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.

PCDC officials said they reached an agreement with Pueblobano Development Corp., which was acting on behalf of a consortium of developers for the Manila project. PCDC is acting as overall project architect and designing two golf holes. The developers have opened negotiations

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ASGCA admits six new associate members

PINEHURST, N.C. — The American Society of Golf Course Architects elected six new associate members at its 50th anniversary meeting here in late March. Chris Cochran of North Palm Beach, Fla.; Perry Dye of Denver; Les Furber of Columbus, Ohio; and Alice Dye and brother to P.B., also an ASGCA member, is president of Dye Designs. The group has designed dozens of golf courses in Asia as well as Karsten Golf Course at Arizona State University in Tempe, Red Mountain Ranch Country Club in Scottsdale and Glenmoor Country Club in Englewood, Colo.

Whitten brings to his work a focus on the theory that the best way to grab a golfer’s attention is by the throat. “In Hard Target Architecture: operates on the theory that the best way to grab a golfer’s attention is by the throat. “In Hard Target Architecture, the fairways are no wider than numchuks and the greens are the size of loin cloths,” he said. “Bunkers aren’t water hazards, they’re black lagoons. When you’re told the course record is 62 — lost balls, not strokes — it’s Hard Target Architecture.”

The 18th hole, Valhalla Golf Club

Golf Course in Burnaby and Meadow Gardens Golf Resort in Port Meadows. A partner in Nelson-Haworth, Haworth has been active around the world, designing such tracks as Royal Hills Golf Course in Near Bangkok, Thailand and Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club’s East and West courses in Malaysia.

The chief designer for Matthews & Associates, Hearnn has produced such courses as Majestic at Lake Walden in Heartland, Mich., and Mistwood Golf Course in Lake Ann.

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