

BRIEFS



IGM STRIKES NEW DEAL

LAKE PLACID, Fla. — International Golf Management, Inc. (IGM) has taken over professional golf course maintenance services for Leisure Lakes Golf Course here. IGM will provide course maintenance and landscape management. Leisure Lakes is located in the Leisure Lakes Resort along the shoreline of Lake June. The resort is owned by Avatar Properties.

HUEBER TO BUILD COURSE

LOS ANGELES — David Hueber, a widely known golf industry executive and president of Foothills Golf Development Group LLC, will develop and operate an 18-hole public course 15 miles from downtown Los Angeles.



David Hueber

Red Tail Golf & Equestrian Center will feature an 18-hole course and 8,000-square-foot clubhouse on land leased from L.A. International Golf Club Inc., which unsuccessfully

tried to develop a private club on the 352-acre site. Hueber has served as an executive with the PGA Tour, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of the National Golf Foundation, and CEO of the Ben Hogan Co.

BRASSIE REPORTS IMPROVED FINANCIALS

TAMPA, Fla. — Brassie Golf Corp. reported a 4-percent jump in total operating revenues to \$2.32 million and an increase in net income to \$0.01 per share during the second quarter of this year, up from \$2.23 million and a \$0.29 loss per share, respectively, for the same quarter a year earlier. For the first six months of the year, the management and course design company reported a \$697,435 decrease in total operating revenues, which it traced to the sale of three courses.

CLUBCORP ACQUIRES TIMARRON

SOUTHLAKE, Texas — Club Corporation of America has acquired Timarron Country Club from Mobil Land Development Corp. The 18-hole, Byron Nelson-designed semi-private course will eventually go private with the completed sale of available full golf memberships. "Timarron will provide an opportunity for CCA to pioneer the concept of turning a high-end public golf facility into a private country club," said CCA executive Randy Williams.

Fore Star's style works well in U.S. Southwest

By PETER BLAIS

LUBBOCK, Texas — Visit 36-hole Meadowbrook Golf Course here and you're likely to see Fore Star Golf President Steve Yonke parking golf cars, busing tables, serving drinks or working behind the pro shop cash register.

"This is a people business," said Yonke, who doubles as Meadowbrook's general manager and head of the six-course management firm that stresses a hands-on management style. "I'm always talking to our customers. Some of their suggestions may be off the wall, but people generally give you good ideas about your operation."

"When we first took over here, we asked the customers what we could do to improve. They wanted us to do a better job handling the golf carts, put starters at both courses, and start a marshaling program. We did those things and the course



The third hole at Picacho Hills Country Club, a Fore Star Golf property in Las Cruces, N.M.

runs much more smoothly than it did."

Yonke gained this insight into the need to quiz customers while working at the course level. He joined Jim Colbert Golf in 1984 and managed several different operations before becoming Colbert's

quality manager. Prior to founding Fore Star in 1992, Yonke received the National Golf Foundation Public Golf Award for his efforts to promote and enhance the game.

Brothers Jeff and Gary Miller soon joined

Continued on page 43

Minimum wage hike to have little impact

By PETER BLAIS

The 90-cent increase in the minimum wage to \$4.75 per hour scheduled to take effect this month will have little impact on course maintenance operations, according to superintendents.

While some courses likely pay close to the minimum wage, those contacted by *Golf Course News* said they already pay laborers more than the new lower limit.

"Most courses in our area are well above the minimum," said Lee McLemore, head superintendent at Birmingham (Ala.) Country Club. "Our wages have gone up significantly the past few years to compete in a small labor pool where unemployment is running around 3.5 percent.

We're competing with other businesses, like McDonald's, for workers and they're already above \$5 per hour."

McLemore said he starts laborers at his private club, the oldest club in Birmingham, at \$6 to \$6.50 per hour. That's 25 percent more than the \$4.75 limit scheduled to take effect in October and the \$5.15 that becomes law Sept. 1, 1997.

"The best part of the [minimum wage] bill from our perspective was the change that now allows private clubs to start 401k retirement plans for employees," McLemore said. "I called our senators to encourage them to support the bill because of that. A 401k plan allows us to do

Continued on page 41

PERSONNEL PERSPECTIVES

Trash talking your way to a cleaner course

By VINCE ALFONSO

Bobby had worked for me since he was a sophomore in high school. The soon-to-be graduated college senior was in his last season at our golf course. He was doing his usual good job.

I walked out the south door of our clubhouse and looked toward the range to see if I could spot a customer who had a phone call. As my eyes panned the range tee, I noticed the range garbage container was overflowing. I immediately called out to Bobby, who was moving some golf cars nearby.

I said "Bobby, would you please go out to the range and empty the trash container, and while you are there, would you run over to the outing tent and pick up the debris overlooked by last night's closing crew?" I explained in more detail about the debris and sent him on his way.

I watched Bobby drive his Yamahauler past the range trash

Continued on page 40

Vince Alfonso Jr. is a former course owner, general manager, past president of the National Golf Course Owners Association and founder of Alfonso Creative Golf Enterprises, Inc., a course management consulting firm.



PLAYER REMODELS KIAWAH COURSE

The second hole at Cougar Point Golf Course is part of a \$4 million renovation recently completed by Gary Player for Kiawah Island Resort owner Virginia Investment Trust (VIT). Cougar Point opened Sept. 8 on the site of the former Marsh Point course, also a Player design. VIT acquired Kiawah in a Resolution Trust Corp. auction of Landmark Land Co. properties in October, 1993. Since then, VIT has also purchased the Pete Dye-designed Ocean Course for \$27 million, started construction of a \$5 million clubhouse at Tom Fazio-designed Osprey Point, made improvements to the golf facilities and opened the new Business Center and Food Court. VIT has so far invested a total of nearly \$50 million in the resort.

Personnel

Continued from page 39

container without hesitation. He picked up several large pieces of debris by the tent and returned to his post. I was quite puzzled by his behavior, so, I walked down the steps from the deck and said, "Bobby, you didn't do what I asked you to do." He answered, "Yes, I did."

"Bobby," I said, "you didn't pick up the trash in the range container and you didn't pick up the small debris by the tent."

He said, "Oh, that. That trash in the range container — that's the grounds crew's trash. They'll pick that up tomorrow morning. And as for the bottle caps and toothpicks and stuff by the tent, nobody will ever see that stuff."

"Bobby," I said, "that's the problem around here. I asked you to perform a simple task and you just didn't do it. Now please go back out there and do as I asked you to do. I don't want our range customers contending with an overflowing trash container and I don't want that trash left by the tent."

Bobby bristled up and shot back, "I'll tell you what the problem is around here. It's you. You see trash that nobody sees."

Surely, you can understand that a lengthy discussion followed Bobby's remarks. I quickly pointed out that trash is trash. It's not grounds crew trash, or golf guide trash, or customer trash, or golf car crew trash, or snack bar trash or outing trash...it's just trash. I explained that our customers will never take pride in our course if we don't first show them that we take pride in our course. I went on to explain that eradicating trash, any trash, was one sure way of expressing our pride in our golf course. Needless to say, Bobby returned to the range and tent and removed all the trash in question.

As much as I wanted to place blame somewhere else, I could not. You see I had to face the fact that it was I who was to blame for this predicament. It was I who had not thoroughly explained and trained my staff about trash and how its timely removal is directly tied to the color of the ink on our bottom line.

So I called an emergency staff meeting to discuss, that's right, trash. Our meeting featured a keynote address by yours truly entitled "Just Whose Trash Is It Anyway?" and subtitled "Why Trash Has To Away." Other items

discussed included the results of a survey done by the National Golf Foundation some years before that gave us all some sobering data. Golfers stated their No.1 reason for returning to a facility was the cleanliness and beauty of the entry, parking lot and general environs around the clubhouse.

First impressions are so important. The survey con-

firmed that when your establishment exudes pride of ownership and management through cleanliness, customers get the message. Just ask the Disney people. They can go on for hours about the benefits of cleanliness as a way of achieving a black ink bottom line.

Do you have a problem with trash in your place? Do you pick it up? Do you tell others to

pick it up? Do you ignore it? What do you do about it? You do something. If you are doing nothing, you are doing something — nothing. Think.

If you believe what the surveys say. If you believe what Disney research says. If you believe as I do, then you had better *explain* and *train*. If it's trash, it's got to go and it's everybody's job on the staff to get it done.

MASTERS ADDS TWO

ORLANDO, Fla. — Masters Golf Corp. has reached agreements with two new Florida projects. Orangetree at Valencia in Naples is a daily-fee track and The Monarch at Royal Highlands is in a Leesburg retirement community. Both are scheduled to open in 1997.

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