

BRIEFS



**TROON DEVELOPS SAVANNAH LINKS**

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Official groundbreaking took place recently for the Westin Savannah Harbor Resort, which includes an 18-hole Robert Cupp-designed course. Located on Hutchinson Island, the resort is being developed by CSX Realty Development LLC of Jacksonville, Fla., and Merritt W. Dixon III, a Savannah real-estate investor. Troon Golf of Scottsdale, Ariz., will help develop and eventually manage the golf property. Funding for the \$100 million project is being provided by Nomura Capital, a leading commercial real-estate financier. The city and county are building the 345,000-square-foot Georgia International Maritime & Trade Center immediately adjacent to the resort. Both projects are scheduled to be completed in early 1999.

**NGP SELLS NEW ORLEANS TRACK**

SANTA MONICA, Calif.— National Golf Properties Inc. announced that it has sold Stonebridge Country Club in New Orleans for approximately \$1 million. National Golf Properties acquired Stonebridge in July 1996 as part of its purchase of 20 golf courses from Golf Enterprises Inc. National Golf Properties will recognize a gain on the sale.

**PALMER NAMES TIERNEY VP**

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management has named Tim Tierney vice president of operations, a position responsible for managing company-owned, managed and franchised courses. Tierney was formerly executive vice president and chief operating officer of Kona Ranch Restaurant Group. Tierney's recruitment from the restaurant industry supports Palmer Management's ongoing effort to integrate golf industry experts with professionals from other customer-driven, branded chains, according to a Palmer spokesman.

**CJH READIES OLDE SCOTLAND LINKS**

BRIDGEWATER, Mass. — Olde Scotland Links Golf Course is on schedule to open here in early August. The town-owned, 18-hole layout was designed by Cornish, Silva and Mungeam and will be managed by Corcoran Jennison Hospitality Inc. The course site was formerly full of drainage ditches and served as a stump dump, filled in some areas over 40 feet high.

MOVIN' ON UP

Eger ascends Golf Services Group's career ladder

By PETER BLAIS

Remaining flexible enough to seize opportunities and travel where those opportunities took her has been the key to Paula Eger's success.

Golf Services Group's director of golf course maintenance and agronomy has traveled the world and worked with numerous companies during her 20-plus-year golf industry career.



Paula Eger

"You have to stay flexible and find quality people to work with," said the 44-year-old executive with the Houston-based development/management firm. [President] Jim Hardy has always given me the support I needed, but also given me the freedom to make my own decisions."

Golf has always been a part of Eger's life. Her childhood home bordered the second fairway at Greenbriar Hills near St. Louis. With her family's encouragement, she became a successful junior golfer and rode that skill to the University of Arizona, where she played on the school's golf team.

Eger wanted to design golf courses.

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Rio Colorado GC in Bay City, Texas, is one of Golf Services Group's courses.

Houston management company prepares to open Tennessee tracks

By PETER BLAIS

HOUSTON — This summer's anticipated resumption of construction on the long-delayed Jack Nicklaus-designed Chickasaw State Park golf course near Jackson, Tenn. (see June *GCN*, page 6), will come as welcome news at the offices of Golf Services Group.

The Houston-based firm is developing and will eventually manage Chickasaw and the other three Nicklaus-designed, government-financed state park courses scheduled to open over the next two years in the Volunteer State. Building and running the so-called Bear Track courses — which could eventually number seven or

eight facilities and should compete with Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Trail network — will increase GSG's visibility in the golf course management industry.

"There's a tremendous need for golf courses with green fees in the \$20-to-\$30 range," said GSG President James Hardy. "The Tennessee courses will cost \$28 to \$30 and host about 36,000 rounds a year apiece."

That mid-priced, daily-fee market is GSG's target as the company grows nationwide. "There are too many courses being built for the upscale market, which I see as anything over \$60," Hardy said.

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PERSONNEL CORNER

Everybody needs a Paul O'Brien

By VINCE ALFONSO

Every business needs a good product at a good price. Golf is no different. In order to succeed, we would all agree, we need good greens, good golf cars, good food, good merchandise, and all at good prices.

But, some golf organizations that have all this still don't make it. Why? Maybe it has to do with something as fundamental as sayin' "Hi, glad to see you" and meaning it.

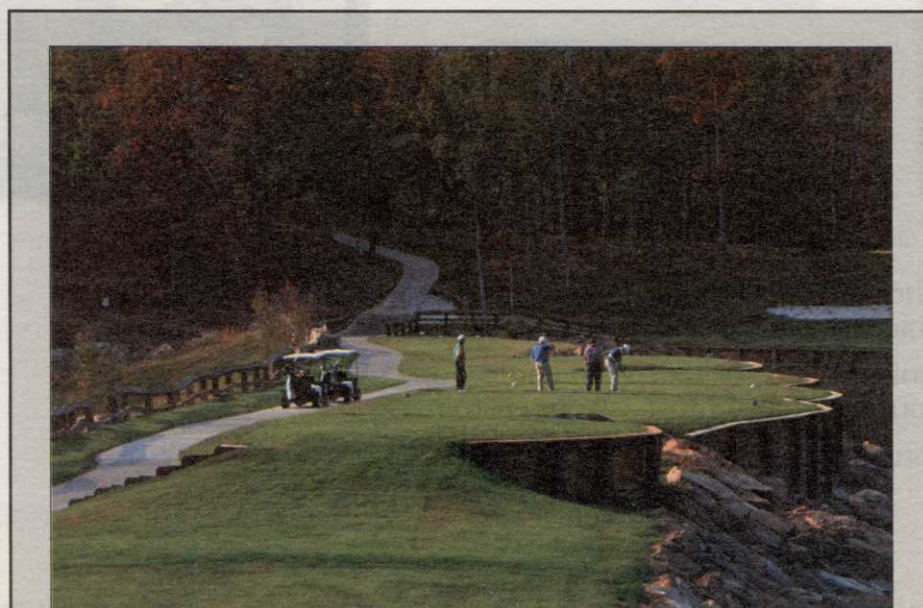
I have to admit, I have never read Sam

Walton's book. But, I'm sure that somewhere in that book, Sam talked about why he wanted a greeter at the front door of every WalMart store. He or someone on the WalMart team decided it would be good for business. In other words, they believed it would be good for the bottom line to have somebody say, "Good Morning" or "Good Afternoon" or "Good Evening", and shake the hand of every single customer, every single time they came through the door of a WalMart store.

I can't claim some revelation from studying the masters of marketing and sales, but as ya'll are keenly aware (if you read my column monthly), I did study under my dad, who I believe to be an unpublished master. So I guess I knew how important greeting your customer was, because I saw my Dad do it. He taught me by his example just how important sayin' "Hi, glad to see you" really was. I have always encouraged my employees to follow my lead in this area, but I prayed I would someday find someone who truly understood its importance the way my Dad did.

In late spring 1983, my prayers were answered when a gentleman named Paul O'Brien made an appointment to see me.

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MARTTY EXPANDS INTO 'BAMA

Martty Golf Management (MGM) has signed a management contract with Cherokee Ridge Country Club in Union Grove, Ala., a private club and residential community near Huntsville. The 7,000-yard championship layout hosts the Nike Tour's Alabama Classic. MGM will manage and market the club.

Vince Alfonso Jr. is a 40-year golf-industry veteran, president of Alfonso Creative Enterprises Inc., and owner of Kimberling Golf Course near Branson, Mo. He can be reached at 417-739-4370.

## Paula Eger

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The university didn't offer a formal training program, so she took all the agronomy and landscape architecture offerings available as well as a summer internship at Tucson Country Club with superintendent Art Snyder.

She worked briefly for architect Joe Finger after graduation, but the mid-1970s economic downturn ended that association after six months. Eger contacted numerous architects before Robert von Hagge met her while building Walden on Lake Conroe near Houston.

"He was in the process of moving his office and convinced the superintendent to take me on as a laborer until he got settled in his new office," Eger recalled. "They were putting the final touches on shaping the course and were just starting the grow-in. When the course opened, they offered to make me assistant superintendent. I loved working outdoors so I accepted.

"I didn't think I'd be there very long, but 7 1/2 years later I was still with the same company and developers. I eventually became the construction superintendent when they started Walden on Lake Houston and stayed there until just before it opened."

Eger enjoyed her work as a superintendent, but found her talents best suited to construction and grow in. She accepted a six-month position overseeing the grow-in of an Australian golf course before returning to the United States, where she met up with Jim Hardy (her boss at Golf Services Group) and Gary Grigg (past GCSAA president).

She joined them at Kindred & Co., a Houston-based development and management firm, in 1985. Hardy was Kindred's vice president of development and Grigg the turf specialist. Eger traveled extensively, helping build and grow in a half dozen courses, including The Resort at Gold Canyon in Apache Junction, Ariz.; Tampa Palms G&CC in Tampa, Fla.; Hallbrook CC in Leawood, Kan.; and Bay Oaks CC in Houston.

Hardy founded Golf Services in the late 1980s and recruited Eger while building the Hardy/Peter Jacobsen-designed Creekside in Salem, Ore., in 1992. Her position allows her to bring her assorted talents into play as a landscape architect, course superintendent, construction superintendent and course designer. She also serves as a design associate with Jacobsen/Hardy Design Co.,

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Golf Services' sister firm.

"I help select the superintendents at our courses and work with them on a regular basis," she said. "My job is to encourage and support them, help them advance their professional education, provide advice on how to deal with guests, members, the pro shop staff, budgets, etc."

And she remains very

involved in the design area, her original passion. Among the various projects in the Golf Services' portfolio are the four, Jack Nicklaus-designed Tennessee state park courses, which will open over the next two years.

"I've been very involved with that and will stay with them through grassing, opening and daily maintenance," she said.

### GOLFTRUST SECURES \$100M REVOLVING CREDIT TO EXPAND

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Golf Trust of America Inc. said its operating partnership has obtained a commitment for a two-year, \$100 million secured revolving bank credit facility, which it will use to pursue additional golf courses and for working capital. Borrowings under the facility will carry a floating interest rate plus 1.75 to 2.00 percentage points, with provisions for the rate to be reduced upon the attainment of a senior debt rating. NationsBank Corp. will serve as the administrative agent of the facility.

# Here's One Birdie You Don't Want To See On Your Course.



## Golf was never meant to be a water sport.

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