

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.

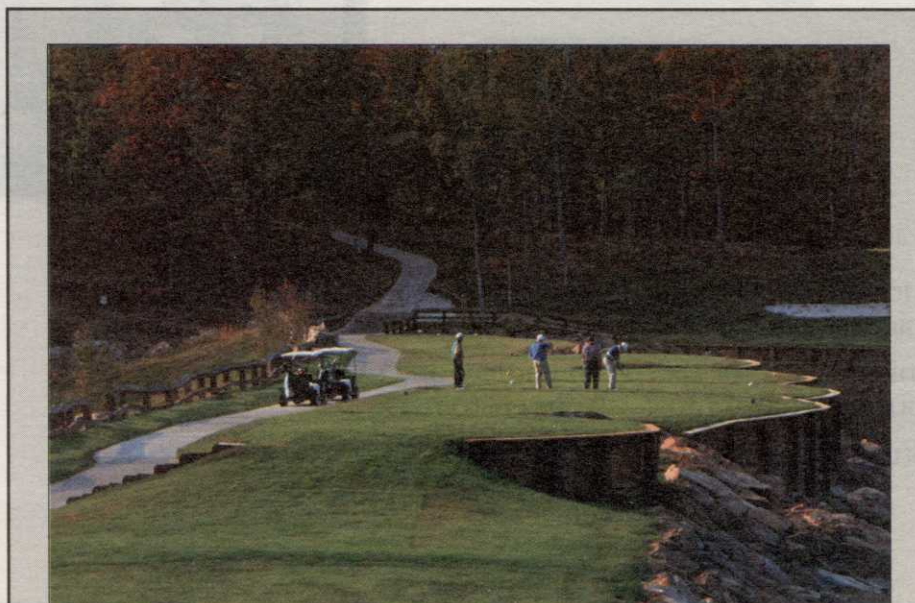
I have to admit, I have never read Sam

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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MARTY EXPANDS INTO 'BAMA

Marty 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.

Fripp Company assumes management of S.C.'s University Club

BLYTHEWOOD, S.C. — The Fripp Co., owner and managing company for Fripp Island Resort and other properties along the South Carolina coast, has assumed control of The University Club here for an undisclosed price.

The Fripp Co. assumed management of the 27-hole property, located near the University of South Carolina, on June 1, adding to the company's portfolio in South Carolina.

Founded in 1993, The University Club has approximately 1,600 members. Recent additions and improvements include a new nine-hole course, opening this summer, a 14,000-square-foot putting green, continuous golf cart paths, clubhouse and pro shop. In addition, the club has a 30-acre, golf practice facility where the men's and women's teams practice.

"We're excited about the purchase of The University Club," said Ken Willis, president

of The Fripp Co., who attended USC and is a longtime Gamecock Club member and supporter. "This course is one of the finest in South Carolina and gives us an opportunity to expand into the growing North Columbia area. Through The Fripp Co.'s golf and property management expertise, we plan to make further improvements to the club while enhancing services for new and existing members."

Alfonso

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Once our meeting began, it became very clear to me that Paul wanted to work for me. After a very brief exchange of ideals and ideas, I made it very clear to Paul that I wanted him to work for me too.

You see, Paul O'Brien impressed me as a man who never met a stranger, who counted all human beings as special and believed they should be treated accordingly. He respected women and their obvious right to be golfers and therefore believed in treating them equally. Paul impressed me as the most honest, dependable and hardworking guy I had ever met. Remember, I came to all these conclusions in one meeting. This should tell you something about just what a special human being Paul O'Brien is.

Paul was hired and became "Mr. Morning" at The Rail [a Springfield, Ill., course Alfonso co-owned for many years]. Paul was there every morning, five days a week, for 13 years, to greet my early customers. I never once doubted whether each customer greeted and then waited on by Paul O'Brien felt welcome, special and appreciated. Why, to put it in simple terms, having Paul O'Brien work with me was the next best thing to having Uncle Mario or my Dad working with me. I knew without question, Paul represented our values to a tee.

Customers would come back year after year, especially the women, and if Paul wasn't there, they were disappointed. You see, they wanted to see Paul. They wanted to feel his warmth. They wanted to see him flash that Paul O'Brien smile.

In 1995, The Rail was voted the 4th Friendliest Golf Course to Women in the United States of America by the readers of *Golf For Women* magazine. As hard as my wife, Sally, and I, and the rest of our staff, worked on this women in golf issue through the years, I would have to credit Paul O'Brien with making the greatest impression on our women customers.

We were very fortunate to have Paul O'Brien on board. He was good for our customers, good for our employees, and good for our bottom line.

My question to you is quite fundamental. Do you have a Paul O'Brien in your golf organization? Have you felt it would be a waste of labor dollars to have a hand shaker and greeter on the payroll? Take it from me or take it from Sam, find yourself a Paul O'Brien and put him on the payroll, today. It will be money well spent. Remember, sayin' "Hi, glad to see you," and meaning it, just might make the difference.

Turn your cart fleet into a divot repair armada.

While our new Seed & Soil Caddie for Powered Golf Carts is not the first system ever invented for carrying seed and soil to the fairway, it certainly is the best. Compare the advantages for yourself.

Naturally, it's easy to use. Players simply grab it by its

integral handle-spout and pour the mixture into the divot. It's easy to fill, too, since the entire bottom is a screw-on cap. To keep the rain out, we curved the spout. And we built it to last for years!

It's ideal for use on all brands of golf carts, and all necessary

hardware is

Our new Seed & Soil Caddie for Golf Carts makes it easy for your golfers to pour on the medicine wherever they make a divot!

included for quickly and easily mounting the Holder to each side of the cart's framework or basket.

So why not make it easier for your golfers to repair divots? Contact your nearby Standard Golf distributor and ask about our new Seed & Soil Caddie for Golf Carts. It's the best way to turn your cart fleet into a divot repair armada!



STANDARD GOLF Pro-Line

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