ADD ANOTHER TO NGP/AOG PORTFOLIO
SANTA MONICA, Calif. — National Golf Properties has acquired Baymeadows Golf Course in Jacksonville, Fla., for $4.5 million. The course will be leased to American Golf Corp. Baymeadows features an 18-hole, daily-fee course designed by Gene Sarazen and Desmond Muirhead and includes a driving range, practice facility and clubhouse. NGP has acquired three courses in 1997 for approximately $19 million. Since its initial public offering in 1995, National Golf Properties has acquired 73 courses representing an aggregate initial investment of $374 million.

CRESTA VERDE BUYS MEADOW LAKE CC
ESCONDIDO, Calif. — Cresta Verde Inc. of Los Angeles has purchased Meadow Lake Country Club here. The property was sold for $3.8 million. The seller was The Welk Resort, a $53.1 million destination golf resort under construction here in west San Diego County.

BROWN NAMED ROCKY GAP GM
CUMBERLAND, Md. — Gary W. Brown has been named general manager here at Rocky Gap Lodge & Golf Resort, a $35.1 million destination golf resort under construction here in western Maryland. Brown, who was just awarded the American Society of Association Executive’s “Associate Members Fellows Designation,” comes to Rocky Gap from G.W. Brown Hotel Sales & Marketing Services, a Virginia-based hotel consulting firm where he served as president. Prior to that he served for six years as director of hotel sales for Colonial Williamsburg Properties, Inc.

PERDUE NAMED TO CMAA POST
ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) has promoted Joe Perdue, CCM (Certified Club Manager), CHE (Certified Hospitality Educator) from director of education and professional development to vice president. Perdue has been with the Alexandria, Va.-based association since 1986.

BRIEFS

MOVIN’ ON UP

Dick Schulz knew something: Take a risk

By PETER BLAIS

COVINGTON, Ga. — Seeing hard-working people at his father’s course pay top dollar to play off hardpan turf convinced a teen-aged Dick Schulz that public golfers of average means deserved better for their money.

Family Golf Centers press on with range consolidation

By PETER BLAIS

MELVILLE, N.Y. — Family Golf Centers, Inc. — which owns, operates and manages golf-related facilities — has signed leases to operate six golf properties and letters of intent to acquire three additional centers.

Family Golf has leased or acquired concession licenses to operate College of the Desert Golf Center in Palm Desert, Calif.; Capital Sports Center in Raleigh, N.C.; Randall’s Island Golf Center in New York City; Darlington Golf Center in Malwhah, N.J.; Trotter’s Glen Golf Course in Olney, Md.; and Green Oaks Golf Center in Arlington, Texas.

Letters of intent or purchase agreements have been signed to acquire or operate San Bruno (Calif.) Golf Center; Rio Salado Golf Course in Tempe, Ariz.; and Divot City Golf Center in Milpitas, Calif. Final approvals with local municipal authorities are pending in San Bruno, Tempe and Santa Clara, Calif.

Each of the nine properties contains ranges, pro shops, and short-game practice areas or mini-golf courses. Trotter’s Glen is a full 18-hole course, located near Washington, D.C.; and Rio Salado has a nine-hole executive course near Phoenix. Some facilities will undergo renovations.

The expansion brings Family Golf into new markets in North Carolina and Texas. Following completion of all these transactions, three of which are subject to certain conditions, the total number of facilities owned, operated or under construction will be 45 in 17 states.

The company also announced that Michael P. Kelly, formerly a senior vice president of Golden Bear Golf Centers, Inc., has joined Family Golf as senior vice president and manager of the Southeast region.

Dominic Chang, chairman and CEO, said: "The company has more than doubled its number of operating sites in the last year, and we look forward to continued growth in the future. Mike Kelly brings significant management experience and golf industry knowledge to the company."
YOUR PENNINGTON TURF SPECIALIST

What he knows about grass seed
Eyes to see what grass best suits your needs
Nose to sniff out problems
Finger used to point you in the right direction
What he uses to help get your deliveries made on time
What he uses to listen to your needs
Service with a smile

As you can see, our turf specialists have what it takes to make sure you get the right kind of grass seed at the right time. They spend their time answering your questions about turf requirements, introducing new grasses and delivering seed. They know just what type grass will work best for you and will make sure you get your seed when you want it. And they do it all with a smile on their face. So the next time you need a specialty turfgrass, call Pennington Seed – because nobody beats us on our turf.

May 1997
CIRCLE #136

COBBLESTONE MAKES FIRST GA. BUY
SNELLVILLE, Ga. — Cobblestone Golf Group, Inc. has purchased The Champions Club of Gwinnett near Atlanta. Cobblestone operates 24 golf properties located in California, Texas, Arizona, Virginia, Florida and Georgia. This is its first Georgia acquisition. The Champions Club of Virginia, Florida and Georgia, located in California, Texas, Arizona operates 24 golf properties in Gwinnett near Atlanta. Cobblestone went to work for pro Cotton Berrier at Gwinnett. Schulz thanks Berrier for teaching him the pro shop side of the business. Schulz was runner-up among 250 applicants for the head superintendent position at Atlanta Country Club in 1984. Two weeks after the members of the greens committee made their selection, their top choice died in a plane crash and they offered Schulz the job.

"It was an eerie situation," Schulz recalled. "I talked to Cotton, Nancy [his wife] and my dad. Cotton said it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I accepted the job." Schulz spent five years in Atlanta, updating much of the course and particularly the turf-care facility, formerly a 106-year-old barn where the chemical storage room opened onto the employee lunchroom. He formulated 10- and 20-year plans, which are still guiding maintenance efforts at the nationally ranked club.

Schulz had several opportunities to move on before finally deciding to leave Atlanta CC. "In 1989, a group asked if I'd design, build and operate this course. They offered to make me a partner and give me a maintenance contract on the facility. We started Nov. 1 and opened the following August, which meant we made the incentive clause to open the course within 12 months. That's when I found out the partners had no money left. The next two years were hell." Schulz petitioned the bankruptcy court to allow him to manage the facility. His plan was scrutinized against those presented by some major management companies, he recalled. The judge eventually awarded Schulz the facility and granted him a year to put a reorganization plan in place. It took Dick and Nancy seven months to free The Oaks from reorganization. The course greeted its 300,000th customer in February.

"I'm a risk taker," Schulz explained of his success. "I like to dream about something and then put it into action. But for every dream you must have a backup plan."

"Nancy is the detail person on our team. She can translate a dream and put it on paper in a way that makes sure everyone can follow what is going to happen. None of this would have been possible without her."

The Oaks sits on 260 acres. Schulz plans to add nine and possibly 18 more holes in the near future. He is also considering purchasing two or three more courses in his market area, within a two-hour radius of Atlanta.

"The golf industry needs to give the average golfer something better for his money," he said. "Most good public courses in the Atlanta area are charging $80 to $100 a round. We're getting $25 to $39. Seventy percent of our customer base drives 30 or more miles to play here. We give people great conditions and friendly employees for that price. We could easily go to $50 to $60, but we won't do that. If I could cookie cutter this operation, I could build three or four more courses around here and take a big chunk of the daily-fee market."

Schulz is considering buying another Atlanta-area course that is going through reorganization. "We'd need to do something to set it apart," he said. "Putting in bentgrass would make it an ideal facility."

What would be his advice to other golf course superintendents who want to become course owners?

"If you are putting up your own money, be very careful of the pie-in-the-sky syndromes," he advised. "You don't have to have anything state-of-the-art right from the start. There are always two or three unexpected things that come up and you'll need the money to take care of that."

"If you are part of a group, check out your partners' financial strengths and character references. Do your homework and stick to your plan. If it's a good plan, it will see you through."

As you can see, our turf specialists have what it takes to make sure you get the right kind of grass seed at the right time. They spend their time answering your questions about turf requirements, introducing new grasses and delivering seed. They know just what type grass will work best for you and will make sure you get your seed when you want it. And they do it all with a smile on their face. So the next time you need a specialty turfgrass, call Pennington Seed – because nobody beats us on our turf.

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