GRAHAM, PANKS SPLIT
Player consultant David Graham and architect Gary Panks are terminating their 10-year association in golf course design. Graham is concentrating on a full PGA Senior Tour schedule, while Panks will continue to focus on course design and share more of the credit with his staff, including senior designers Gary Stephenson and Michael Rhoads. The firm will continue to operate in Phoenix and Dallas offices under the name of Gary Panks Associates.

DOAK HIRES PLACEK
TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Renaissance Golf Design has named Don Placek as a design associate. With a degree in environmental design from the University of Colorado at Boulder, Placek has joined the firm to assist primarily to develop concept drawings, construction documents and other graphic-related areas. He has been in the golf course design and construction field for nearly eight years, spending six years at Dye Designs in Denver. His responsibilities will include various levels of involvement with new construction, restoration and consulting.

PUTTING CHALLENGES GO FORWARD
ORLANDO, Fla. — Classic Golf Group, Inc. has been hired by Golf Challenge Corp. to design a “putting challenge course” along International Drive here. Len deBoer, president of Classic Golf, said the course will feature challenging Tifgreen greens and will give golfers an opportunity to win prize packages, including a $25,000 cash grand prize. Construction is underway. A spokesman for Golf Challenge Corp. said the Orlando Putting Challenge Course could be the first of many such projects to be located in high-traffic, resort destination areas.

OSU HONORS ALUMNUS HURDZAN
COLUMBUS, Ohio — Golf course architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan was recognized with the Distinguished Alumni Award by the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Alumni Society in November at Ohio State University. This award recognizes alumni who have brought distinction to themselves, their college and OSU through participation, commitment, and leadership in their profession and community.

GOLFCOURSE NEWS

One of nation’s best 9, Rolling Rock Club, goes 18

IGNIOTER, Pa. — After 76 years as perhaps the best nine-hole course in America, Rolling Rock Club has expanded to 18 holes. The original Donald Ross-designed loop was joined last year by nine new holes from the hand of architect Brian Silva.

A partner with Uxbridge, Mass.-based Cornish, Silva and Mungame, Silva worked worked to match the unique architectural style embodied in the original nine. While Silva is an experienced interpreter of vintage design — he just finished the restoration of 185 bunkers at Ross’ Seminole Golf Club in North Palm Beach, Fla. — the original holes at Rolling Rock Club (RRC) proved a tough act to follow.

“Donald Ross was no fool. He used all the good land back in 1917,” Silva explained. “The site we worked with was very difficult; it was essentially the side of a mountain. It took us close to a dozen route plans to make it work. While Ross was able to gently lay his golf holes onto design-friendly terrain, we were forced to stair-step the holes up and down the side of this mountain. In doing that, we knew right from the start there would be hard edges to the new holes, unlike the comfortable edges of the original nine.

“Our greatest efforts in matching design styles can be found in the green and bunker designs. We consciously set out

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Palmer to get Rossi Award
ANAHEIM, Calif. — Golfing legend Arnold Palmer will receive the 1998 Don A. Rossi Humanitarian Award here during the annual Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBAA) banquet, Feb. 6.

“The award honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the game of golf and its growth, and who have inspired others by their example,” said GCBAA President Paul Eldredge. “I don’t know who we could possibly give the award to who fits that description any better than Arnold Palmer.”

The award is named for Don Rossi, who served as executive director of the National Golf Foundation from 1970 to 1983 and of the GCBAA from 1984 until his death in 1990.

“I am very pleased to receive this award,” said the 68-year-old Palmer. “I knew Don Rossi and appreciated the role he played in building the industry around our game. To receive an award named for him from the golf course builders — who are the backbone of our industry — is indeed an honor.”

Palmer will, however, be unable to attend the GCBAA banquet. Ed Seay, his partner in Palmer Course Design, will accept the award on his behalf.

The son of a golf course superintendent in Latrobe, Pa., Palmer

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Q&A: Jacobson on Nicklaus, design

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design decisions on site: you know what the impact will be — both on the site and the budget. You also learn a lot about the individuals with the contractor. Implementing design in the field is the epitome of teamwork. I have a tremendous amount of respect for shapers and project superintendents, who can turn a vision into reality. I don’t think a lot of people have that level of appreciation unless you see them working day by day, and the artistic ability they have to maximize the potential a site has to offer.

GCN: After a couple years with Packard, Jack Nicklaus Golf Services offered you a job in 1985. You worked on some great properties with Nicklaus, no doubt.

RJ: Yes. It was the opportunity of a lifetime. I started in the Scottsdale office during development of Desert Mountain, and worked on plan production and documentation for proposals for government agencies for the Renegade Course.

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RJ: Yes. It was the opportunity of a lifetime. I started in the Scottsdale office during development of Desert Mountain, and worked on plan production and documentation for proposals for government agencies for the Renegade Course.

Coming from the Midwest, I hadn’t had a lot of exposure to the desert-type setting. It was interesting and certainly had an impact on the design character of the golf courses, as far as layout and handling of transition areas, working with the desert. There are fantastic contrasts and beauty in those desert courses. They are unsurpassed, in my estimation.

A year later they transferred me to the corporate offices in North Palm Beach, Fla. That year a significant occurrence catalyzed the office into design and business opportunities: Jack won the Masters.

The office staff started to grow. I was working as a design associate and on-site coordinator at Bear Lakes Links Course in West Palm Beach and coordinating plan production and specifications for other projects. We had PGA West going at the time, as well as English Turn, Pawley’s Plantation, Long Bay Club, Governor’s Club, Wynstone, Sycamore Hills.

GCN: Was it exciting working with Jack?

RJ: Yes. When I was 10 years old and teeing it up with buddies and coming down the 18th fairway, you’d pretend you were Jack Nicklaus. And then I found myself working with him. It was a special honor.

That’s where I got my master’s degree in golf course architecture. Seeing a golf course through the eyes of the greatest player in the history of the game, I did a lot of listening and learning, and asking a lot of questions.

Jack takes a vested interest in a project — as much as humanly possible with the number of projects he has going. It’s truly amazing how he can recall finite details of each project.

GCN: What was your impetus for starting your own design firm in 1991?

RJ: We were going through a lot of changes. It seemed like the appropriate time. I think that’s the natural evolution in this field, to work under an architect in an apprenticeship to get the background and knowledge required to execute a project from start to finish. Some people have the entrepreneurial inner makings to start out on their own. I don’t regret it. Every day’s a new day with new challenges and its exciting and rewarding.

GCN: Who has had the greatest impact on your design philosophy?

RJ: I think every golf course architect studies some of the great architects of the past. That’s golf course architecture in its purest form. When you look at [Arlie] MacKenzie, [Donald] Ross and [A.W.] Tillinghast and C.B. Macdonald. They all had qualities architects try to emulate. Maybe they like different qualities that were presented through each of those architect’s styles. A lot of people try to emulate the bunkers of MacKenzie, or the greens of Ross, but I think you have to learn both the positives and negatives from those forefathers. Trying to build a Ross course green on a public golf course that does 40,000 to 50,000 rounds a year is probably not the right application for that design style, but maybe you...

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**GOLF COURSE NEWS**

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**CIRCLE #135/GCSAA BOOTH #457-459**
Q&A: Jacobson

Continued from previous page

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**GCN:** What sort of staff do you have?

**RJ:** We have two part-timers as support staff and two full-time designers — me and Doug Myslinski, another Wadsworth alum who was a project supervisor and, more recently, senior estimator.

And I’ve combined those old-school architects along with a guy like Jack Nicklaus. Certainly he gave me the knowledge basis to tap into when you’re formulating a design approach for different projects in different parts of the country.

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That’s what everybody attempts to do today. To what degree they succeed, the public golfers tell you through the success of the project.

From a business standpoint you have to respond to your developer’s mission statement. Define their goals and objectives and then modify the design to accommodate the budget, the level of difficulty they want, or the lack of difficulty. We’re doing some work now on a golf academy, a shorter 9-hole course geared toward beginner golfers. We don’t want 60 bunkers 8 feet deep.

**GCN:** Did Michael Jordan have any input into your design of the Michael Jordan Family Golf Centers?

**RJ:** Not from a design standpoint. He was very involved from the promotional standpoint and with developing programs for inner-city kids and people who don’t have access to golf. That is a key in today’s golf environment. We have to cultivate the youth in golf. They’re our future — the next wave of golfers once you look past the Baby Boom generation.

**GCN:** How many Jordan Golf Centers are planned?

**RJ:** Beyond the first one that is open in Chicago, another is in planning in Charlotte. AMF bought them, but we’re still working with them and have looked at other sites around the country. I don’t know if they are going to pursue them.

**GCN:** You are designing quite a mix of daily-fee, resort and private courses. Have you seen a trend in any direction?

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