

BRIEFS

**LEEKE APPOINTED TO OWNERS BOARD**

MT. PLEASANT, S.C. — Meriam Leeke has accepted a nomination to become a member of the National Golf Course Owners Association board of directors. She is the owner and chief executive officer of Old Channel Trail Golf Course near Grand Rapids, Mich., and an amateur golf champion who made the 36-hole cut in three straight U.S. Women's Opens.



Meriam Leeke

LASALLE BUYS MARRIOTT COURSE

NEW YORK — LaSalle Partners Inc. has acquired the Marriott Seaview Resort in Galloway, N.J., on behalf of an investment partnership. Marriott International, Inc. will continue to manage the resort and its two courses under an existing management agreement. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed. Plans are underway to invest over \$5 million to restore the resort. The hotel's golf courses will also receive significant renovation capital. Work is commencing to restore The Bay Course to architect Donald Ross' original course design. This acquisition brings LaSalle's hotel portfolio to 16 upscale and luxury full-service hotels, with over \$170 million invested in 1997.

COBBLESTONE RETAINS DL&J

DEL MAR, Calif. — Cobblestone Golf Group, Inc. has retained Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette to assist the board of directors in evaluating its strategic alternatives. Formed in 1992, Cobblestone Golf Group, Inc. owns, operates or manages 24 private country clubs and daily-fee courses located in and around San Diego, Phoenix, Dallas, Houston and Austin, Texas, Atlanta, Tampa, Fla., and Richmond, Va.

MARTY TAKES OVER MISS. STATE TRACK

BATON ROUGE, LA. — Marty Golf Management-operated Mallard Pointe golf course in John Kyle State Park, Sardis, Miss., opened for play Nov. 1. Mallard Pointe, designed by Bob Cupp, is the second course of The Magnolia Trace, golf courses developed by the State of Mississippi within its state parks. The first course of The Magnolia Trace, Quail Hollow, designed by Arthur Hills, opened Nov. 15, 1996, at Percy Quin State Park, McComb, Miss.

Management firm sees rosy future in ownership

By PETER BLAIS

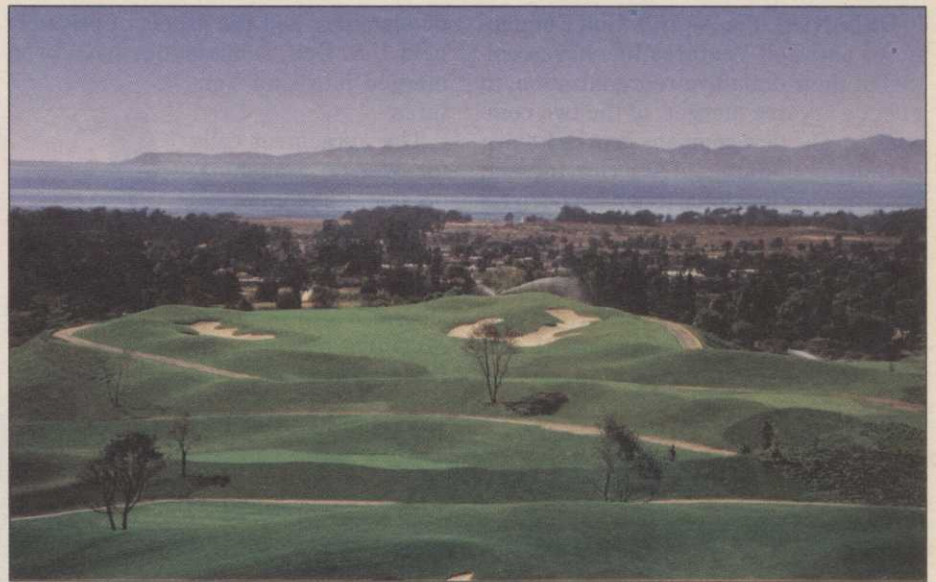
GOLETA, Calif. — The Dec. 7 opening of Glen Annie Golf Club here marks a new direction for Environmental Golf: course ownership.

The Calabasas, Calif.-based firm is a subsidiary of 4,000-employee Environmental Industries Inc., a leading national landscape, nursery, maintenance and site-development contractor.

Environmental Industries has built more than 400 courses since 1954. Today, Environmental Golf is building or remodeling 15 to 20 courses annually. It also has maintenance-only contracts at another 30-plus courses nationwide.

But it was just last year that Environmental Golf entered course ownership. In May 1997, the company assumed part ownership of Arnold Palmer-designed Cherokee Run, which Environmental Golf built for the city of Conyers, Ga., and opened in October 1995.

The first planned build/own course is Damian Pascuzzo- and Robert Muir Graves-designed Glen Annie. Pascuzzo and Graves are also the architects at Westridge Golf Course (opening September 1998) in



Glen Annie GC in Goleta, Calif., is the first course that Environmental Golf built, manages and owns.

LaHabra while Ronald Fream designed The Links at RiverLakes Ranch (opening November 1998) in Bakersfield, a pair of California courses the company will also build and own.

"We've been building courses for 40-plus years for other owners and maintaining them for more than 20,"

explained Director of Golf Mike Dingman of his firm's recent move into ownership. "We just made the decision that it was an industry we were familiar with as far as construction and maintenance and thought it would be a natural progression to get into [overall]

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MOVIN' ON UP

N.C. super realizes career dream

By PETER BLAIS

GRIFTON, N.C. — Brad Brooks, 39, recently realized the dream of many golf course superintendents, to own his own course.

Brooks and his three partners purchased Indian Trails Golf Club, a 28-year-old course located between Kinston and Greenville, N.C., a 90-minute car ride south of Raleigh.

The ownership at Indian Trails is a tight-knit group. Brooks is the superintendent and his wife, Margaret, is the administrator. Partner Ed Wheeler was the pro before and after the purchase.

Wheeler's wife, Debra Bryant, is a certified public accountant and serves as controller. Together they are the four equal stockholders and "provide the synergy

that we think is special," Brooks said.

The foursome formed an S-Corporation. Fortunately, they had to obtain little financing and purchased the course from a construction company whose owners were ready to sell the facility. Brooks group negotiated a price and had a sufficient down payment to get a loan.

"It isn't as complicated as you would think it is," said Brooks, who took the GCSAA course on owning a golf facility and availed himself of National Golf Foundation reports on course ownership. "Ninety percent of the work you have to do to please a bank is just leg-work and number crunching. There is no secret formula you have to know. If you can

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Superintendent Brad Brooks is the new owner of Indian Trails GC in Grifton, N.C.

Palmer adds to mgt. portfolio

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management has signed an agreement with Paloma Golf Group, acquiring four golf courses in the process — two in Buffalo, N.Y., and single courses in New Jersey and Oregon.

"This is the beginning of a great relationship between Palmer Golf and Paloma," said Peter Nanula, chief executive officer of Palmer Golf. "This strategic alliance is the first of many we are currently negotiating, and Paloma and [Paloma Chairman] Garth Chambers are exactly the kind of progressive partners we're seeking to help grow our network.

"Garth appeals to us as a 'merchant developer.' He believes in our vision for bringing a new level of service to

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Brassie realigns organization

TAMPA, Fla. — Brassie Golf Corp.'s Joseph R. Cellura, chairman and chief executive officer, announced that the company has completed its downsize and restructure program that began July 1, 1997. Brassie owns and operates golf courses and holds certain golf-related development, licensing, and marketing rights internationally.

Outstanding issues relating to previous management have been resolved, including the resignations from William Horne and Lance McNeill from the board of directors.

Clifford Bagnall, chief operating officer and chief financial officer of the company, has been named vice chairman of the board of directors.

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Environmental Golf

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management and ownership."

Dingman said the goal of Environmental Golf is to continue concentrating on building and maintaining courses and look at ownership deals as they arise.

"Our goal is to do two to three [build and own] situations a year," he added.

Environmental Golf provides specialized maintenance for private and public courses. It has maintenance-only contracts with the following facilities:

Arizona

Estrella Mountain Golf Course (GC), Goodyear

California

Alhambra Municipal GC,

Alhambra

Bernardo Heights Country Club (CC), San Diego

Canyon Lake CC, Canyon Lake

Lake

Creekside GC, Modesto

DeBell GC, Burbank

Diamond Oaks GC, Roseville

Dryden Park GC, Modesto

Municipal GC, Modesto

Silver Lakes CC, Helendale

Tracy Golf & CC, Tracy

Woodcreek Golf Club,

Roseville

Georgia

Cross Creek Golf Club,

Atlanta

Michigan

Lakes of Taylor, Taylor

North Carolina

Birkdale GC, Huntersville

South Carolina

Oyster Reef Golf Club,

Hilton Head

While Environmental Golf has offered maintenance-only contracts for two decades, it will also offer full-service management arrangements beginning this year.

Asked what would distinguish Environmental Golf from other management firms, Dingman replied: "Probably our overall resources. We have numerous facilities across the United States, which allows us to maintain courses anywhere geographically. Because of those resources and 2,000 employees on the maintenance side, it allows us to have regional experts, horticulturists, agronomists, extremely high-level people. That probably gives us a technology edge and an ability, through technology, to manage labor and quality."

Environmental Golf's fee schedule is "extremely competitive" with other management firms, Dingman said. "That's still a primary concern of every owner. The quality and other issues are important, but price is still a driving factor. "Every deal is different," he continued. "We do things from straight management for a fee to packages where we go in

and take over all the employees and buy all the equipment to provide owners with some additional capital at the time we take over the program."

General Manager of Golf Maintenance Alex Marshall heads the golf maintenance division from his Orlando, Fla., office. Dingman leads the overall course management division from Calabassas.

Vegas' Rio casino opens its own course

LAS VEGAS — Rio Hotel & Casino Inc. announced that its subsidiary, Rio Development Company Inc., has opened the Rio Secco Golf Club.

Located in Henderson, approximately 15 minutes south of the Rio Suite Hotel & Casino, the Rio Secco Golf Club is an 18-hole course designed by Rees Jones. The limited-play course

will have at least 15 minutes between tee times, to provide an enjoyable experience for all players.

President James A. Barrett, Jr. said, "The Rio Secco Golf Club was developed by us as an additional amenity for customers of the Rio, a destination resort."

The fee for Rio customers will be \$190 per round, and for others \$300 per round.

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See PROLINK at the NGCOA Trade Show in Fort Lauderdale, Florida January 26-27, 1998 and at the PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando, Florida January 30-February 2, 1998 (Booth 3283)

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