

## BRIEFS

**GERRISH HIRED AS DESIGN ASSOCIATE**

UXBRIDGE, Mass. — Tim Gerrish has joined the golf course architecture firm of Cornish, Silva and Mungam (CSM) as a full-time design associate. Over the past two years, Gerrish has worked part-time for CSM partner Geoffrey Cornish while earning his master's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst; he graduated in May. A native of Lisbon Falls, Maine, Gerrish earned his undergraduate degree in landscape horticulture from the University of Maine in 1991.

**INC. CITES ENVIROTECH GROWTH**

ENID, Okla.—Envirotech Services, Inc., an environmental consulting firm serving the golf course industry, based here, has been named one of the fastest-growing businesses in the nation by *Inc.* magazine. Less than 7 years old, Envirotech Services has experienced a 700-percent increase in sales from 1992 to 1996. This has placed the company 385th on the annual profile of America's fastest-growing privately held companies.

**PALMER PROMOTES MINCHEW, LARSEN**

ORLANDO, Fla.—Arnold Palmer and Ed Seay, chief operating officer of Palmer Course Design, have named Harrison Minchew director of design services and Erik Larsen director of sales. Both men are vice presidents and senior course designers for the firm. Minchew and Larsen are both regular members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) and the Urban Land Institute.



Harrison Minchew

**ROBBINS HIRES WESTMORELAND**

CARY, N.Y. — Robbins & Associates International has hired Jeffrey Westmoreland as design associate. He had previously worked part-time with the firm while completing his master's degree in landscape architecture at Virginia Tech. He earned a bachelor's degree in turfgrass management from North Carolina State University. Upon graduation, he was employed with Jerry Pate's design firm in Pensacola, Fla., as a course designer and was in charge of its turfgrass program.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

## Beauty from ashes

By MARK LESLIE

SEAFORD, Del. — Fortuitous. That is the operative word here, where Seaford Golf and Country Club opened a second nine holes on May 2. Fortuitous in terms of time and money.

**Time:** Because Seaford G&CC members had debated adding a second nine to their venerable nine for 15 years, and the government just happened to demand that the neighboring DuPont Corp. nylon plant dispose of acres of a byproduct, coal ash, that it had piled up over 30 years of operation.

**Money:** Because Seaford G&CC paid a mere \$800,000 for a brand spanning new nine-hole course, while DuPont paid the remaining \$1.2 million and still saved a couple million compared to the cost of disposing of the coal ash in another fashion.

"There is a 25-acre pocket of nylon



DuPont's manufacturing plant is visible in the background on the Seaford Golf and Country Club's par-4, 400-yard 3rd hole.

buried on the site 8 to 10 feet deep," explained golf course architect Rich Mandell of Whole in One Design Group in Durham, N.C., and Easton, Md. "They didn't know what to do with it.

"It was a wasteland. The ash was in a big pile in a field. They had three

holding ponds where it would go directly from the factory, sit for awhile, then be taken out and stored adjacent to the pond."

When the government mandate came down, the plan for a golf course seemed heaven-sent — for both sides. Orig-

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The par-4 4th hole at Long Island Golf and Country Club's North Course in Guangdong Province, China, is an example of J. Michael Poellot's recent work abroad.

## Q & A Poellot's return to America stresses attention to detail

J. Michael Poellot's name is on golf courses from the People's Republic of China (the country's first private country club, Beijing Golf Club) to Japan and Thailand. But the 1966 Iowa State University landscape architecture graduate has done little in America since leaving a partnership with Dick Phelps and Brad Benz in Colorado 10 years ago. That is, until now. A former vice president of the Robert Trent Jones II Group, heading Jones' overseas division, Poellot and JMP Golf Design Group partners Mark Hollinger, Bob Moore and Brian Costello are concentrating heavily on the United States, with a half dozen projects in the works.

**Golf Course News:** You've undertaken a new relationship with Ernie Els. Can you tell us about it?

**J. Michael Poellot:** This initial opportunity with Ernie Els was a desire on the part of Kemper Sports and their local partner doing a project in the Washington, D.C., area. It so happened that Ernie had been looking for an architect he could be associated with whose work he would be confident in. We had just had an interview with Ernie at Winged Foot at the

PGA Tournament last fall and we seemed to be on the same page in terms of our philosophy of golf. It was Ernie's intent that he would not get involved, as some other professionals had, in doing a tremendous number of projects. He wanted a limited amount and to do them well and to be intimately involved.

I found him to be very thoughtful, and he listened well, which opened a great insight into our compatibility. We were both able to listen as opposed to dictate, which will result in a better relationship and a better product. We have met a number of times since then. We hiked the whole property in D.C. for hours trying to identify green and tee sites and let our imaginations run wild and see what the site would yield in terms of a great golf experience.

Subsequently, we have gotten together to talk further about bunkering strategy and other aspects of the playability of the course.

**GCN:** How involved will Els be in your work?

**JMP:** At this moment the Washington project is the only one we are working on.

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## Rapid assessment, national survey on Audubon agenda

By MARK LESLIE

SELKIRK, N.Y. — A nationwide survey on environmental issues and a book enabling "rapid environmental assessment" of property for development appear on the horizon for Audubon International (AI) and may jump-start stalled attempts to build Audubon Golf Courses.

The Audubon courses, thought last fall to be on the verge of reality, still await that moment. Offered land from various private and public sources around the country, AI last fall formed the Audubon International Golf and the Environment Land Trust to develop courses that would also serve as environmental research and demonstration centers. Last September, with \$300 million to \$500 million in pledges from its principles, The Golf Co. was formed to partner with AI and identify and build Audubon Golf Courses.

The two parties expected to have two or three contracts in hand by the end of the year.

Admitting a long "period of frustration" finding the right property and circumstances, AI President Ron Dodson is still waiting for the first.

"We need the first one to be a home run," he said, "but more than that: We need people to know these will be Golf and the Environment 'research facilities' that happen to be golf courses, and they will be built in locations where we can test environmental issues in long-term research."

To that end, Dr. Larry Woolbright, dean of science at Si-

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## ASGCA donates to three groups

CHICAGO — As part of its second annual President's Grant Program, the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) Foundation has presented grants to the Indiana Golf Foundation (IGF), Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and Tufts Archives in Pinehurst, N.C., houses many valuable drawings and

works from famed architect and ASGCA founding member Donald Ross and others.

ASGCA Immediate Past President Alice Dye said the donations represent individual contributions of society members.

IGF will use its grant to help launch its new golf camp for at-risk children.

The GCSAA grant was for its new "Investing in the Beauty of Golf Campaign," a \$5-million effort to support superintendent education.



In response to our feature story in May on estate golf courses, course architect Mark Mungeam of Cornish, Silva & Mungeam sent us photos of this course built in the 1920s in Pinehurst, N.C. Called Palmer Woods, it was designed by John R. Bowker for W.A. Fisher.

## Green It Up and Keep It Green

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## Morrish's River Valley Ranch opens

CARBONDALE, Calif. — Set in the midst of a rich ranching history, River Valley Ranch Golf Club opened for play in June as Roaring Fork Valley's newest 18-hole public course.

The club is a partnership between Crown Golf Properties of Chicago and Houston-based

Hines, who hired Jay Morrish to design the layout.

Stretching from 5,294 to 7,311 yards, the course was built along the banks of Crystal River, with four holes playing over scenic rapids and with view of 12,953-foot Mt. Sopris. Pinion pines and sagebrush add their unique spice

to the setting.

To prevent contaminants from entering Crystal River, Morrish designed the course with dry wells, large retention areas and activated charcoal green filters. Basins and traps catch water that may contain sediments from erosion before it flows into the river.

## Audubon projects key future development

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enna College, is taking a one-year sabbatical, starting Aug. 1, and will work on two key projects setting the stage for the Audubon Golf Courses:

- A nationwide survey of government agencies, not-for-profit environmental organizations, golf entities and others to "give people a chance to tell us what the environmental issues are in various parts of the country," Dodson said.

- A book on "rapid environmental assessment" of property for development.

The problem in developing Audubon courses "is not in finding land," Dodson said. "Our problem is that people say they want to give us land, then they say, 'We want to build housing around it, too.' And then we have to worry about buffer zones and whether the project will work and those sorts of questions."

The survey, he said, will help identify properties best suited to the Audubon projects.

"We will take a GPS [Global Positioning Satellite] approach to environmental priority-setting," Dodson said, adding that the survey will determine what the issues are in various parts of

the country. With that information in hand, AI will be able to identify what relative research exists, and what needs to be studied.

"If we have a lot of data, we already have the answer," Dodson said. "But if we don't, we can state the top five or six environmental issues in each of the five or six regions of the country in terms of population growth. Those issues will be our priorities."

Audubon will then look for properties in each region which can be built on and study the specified issues.

"Some people say when you build a course in a forested area, you fragment the habitat, and when you fragment the habitat you displace forest birds, and cowbirds come in and parasitize their nests, etc.," Dodson said. "We actually found more cowbird parasitism at a state park than at Prairie Dunes Country Club [in Hutchinson, Kan.], so we have no data to prove that concern. That information in hand, how would you do research on that project?"

"We want to take a piece of property that is forested, build a golf course in the forest and find

out what the forest is like now and what it is like later," he added. "That will get some people upset with us. But we say, first, grassland birds are in worse shape than forest birds; and, second, we don't have any data to prove what you just claimed. The only way to prove that is to do it."

Meanwhile, Woolbright already has enough information to write a book on how to do a rapid environmental assessment of a property.

It will inform developers how to look at a piece of land based on slope, soil type, features, etc. and rank it on a scale of 1 to 10 according to its environmental sensitivity and cost of construction.

"Those two projects together will govern where we go with these Golf and the Environment Research Facilities," Dodson said.

AI hopes to have the rapid environmental assessment handbook available to the public by the end of Woolbright's sabbatical in 1999. The set of regional environmental issues should be ready before then, Dodson said.

"If we find a property we think is an environmental home run and we can set it up for research, we probably will proceed even while we're doing our survey," he added.