

BRIEFS



CMAA'S SINGERLING HONORED

ALEXANDRIA, Va.—The 1998 Industry Leader of the Year Award from the Tourism and Convention Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), was presented to James Singerling, executive vice president of the Club Managers Association of America. Singerling has headed CMAA since 1990 and has long been a champion of education. Under his leadership, CMAA's presence on university campuses has grown to 32.



James Singerling

IGM TAKES OVER ROSS LAYOUT

LAKELAND, Fla.—International Golf Maintenance (IGM) has been selected by Dunedin Country Club to oversee its golf course maintenance operations. Under the three-year agreement, IGM provides all aspects of golf course maintenance for this Donald Ross-designed, 18-hole layout. The 6900-yard course has been in operation since 1927. The city of Dunedin took ownership in 1962.

GOLF TRUST ACQUIRES PAIR

CHARLESTON, S.C.—Golf Trust of America, Inc. has closed its acquisitions of Tierra Del Sol Country Club, an 18-hole golf facility located near Albuquerque, NM, for \$3.6 million, and Ohio Prestwick Country Club, an 18-hole upscale private golf facility located near Akron, Ohio, for \$6.4 million.



ACQUISITIONS

STAND JOIN WILSON GG

WHITE BEAR LAKE, Minn. — The Wilson Golf Group, a White Bear Lake-based course ownership and operations company, named Greg Stand director of acquisitions. Stand also is general manager of one of the group's Oak Glen, a 27-hole public facility in Stillwater, Minn. The Wilson Golf Group owns and operates six facilities: Oak Glen and Applewood Hills in Stillwater, Minn.; Gem Lake Hills in White Bear Lake; North Links GC in North Mankato, Minn.; Adobe Creek in Fruita, Colo.; and Chipeta in Grand Junction, Colo.



Hyatt Dorado Beach course in Puerto Rico.

Rosmarin assumes Hyatt golf reins

By PETER BLAIS

CHICAGO — Hyatt Hotels Corp., which operates 23 courses in the United States and Caribbean, has hired former Golden Bear Golf Centers executive Gary Rosmarin as the hotel chain's director-golf operations.

Rosmarin will oversee management, marketing, operations and development of Hyatt's golf facilities. Hyatt has Caribbean golf operations in Aruba, Grand Cayman and Puerto Rico. Its U.S. facilities are located in Scottsdale, Ariz., Indian Wells, Calif., Vail, Colo., Orlando, Fla., Incline Village, Nev., Hilton Head, S.C., San Antonio, Texas, Koloa, Kauai and Lahania, Maui, Hawaii.

"My responsibilities deal with specific operational issues as well as new golf development and remodeling of some of our existing properties," said the Tulane and Florida State University graduate.

"We're getting ready to make a significant investment in Puerto Rico to bring Dorado Beach and Cerromar back to the wonderful condition they were in many years ago and make them the jewels of the Caribbean. When people traditionally thought about the Caribbean and golf, they thought about Puerto Rico and Dorado Beach as the places to go. We're also working on new resort properties on St. Lucia and St. Kitts."

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Meditrust realigns management staff
Cobblestone Golf to benefit

NEEDHAM HEIGHTS, Mass. — The Meditrust Companies announced that Abraham Gosman has resigned from the positions of chairman of the boards, chief executive officer (CEO) and director and that Thomas Taylor has been appointed interim chairman. David Benson, president of Meditrust Corp. since 1991, will serve as interim CEO.

Over the next 60 days, Meditrust anticipates filling the chairman and CEO positions, reviewing and approving a modified investment and operating strategy for The Meditrust Companies, and selecting an appropriate corporate structure through which to conduct the business activities in response to the recent paired share REIT legislation.

Said Gosman: "Following the successful completion of the acquisitions of La Quinta Inns, Cobblestone Golf Group and Santa Anita over the past nine months, I feel that I have accomplished my mission in assembling these premier assets. The Meditrust Companies is no longer just a healthcare REIT but has evolved into a business that requires complex capital markets and operating expertise on the part of whomever serves as the chairman

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Nicklaus, ClubCorp join development forces nationwide

DALLAS—Two of the golf industry's leading family-operated dynasties have formed a new joint venture to build, own and operate as many as three dozen Jack Nicklaus Signature courses worldwide over the next 10 years.

Officials of Golden Bear International Inc. of North Palm Beach, Fla., and Dallas-based ClubCorp said the joint venture will build three golf course products: private golf and country clubs; upscale daily-fee courses; and "The Bear's Best," a series of daily-fee courses that will feature replications of Nicklaus-designed golf holes.

Course layouts will be by Nicklaus Design. Certain projects might be co-designed by Nicklaus and other family members involved in Nicklaus Design, including son Jack Nicklaus II. The courses and country clubs will be operated by Club Corporation of America (CCA), a unit of Dallas-based ClubCorp founded by Robert Dedman Sr., and now headed by his son, Bob Dedman Jr.

The management committee for the

PERSONNEL CORNER

Looking for Mister Good Greeter Plus

By VINCE ALFONSO

Between 1977 and 1982, when I was general manager and head professional at Holiday Golf Club in Olive Branch, Miss., a significant contingent of Japanese golfers from the Sharp plant in Memphis, Tenn., frequented our course every Saturday and Sunday.

I cannot tell you the number of times one of them would remove a set of irons or woods from my shelf, walk to the cash register and ask this question, "Takea Veesa!?"

Of course I "took a Veesa". I also "took" Cash, Check, Master Card and American Express. I was happy to take whatever method of payment they wanted to give me.

However, if I had just been there to take their Visa or cash, etc., I wouldn't be telling you this story.

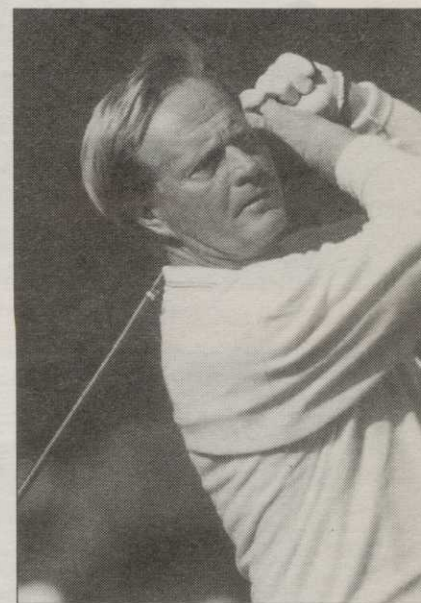
Taking their money, or any other customers' money for that matter, although essential to the business, was just a very small part of my job.

You see, my real job was to make them feel appreciated and welcome, to make them smile and have fun, to make them want to come back again and again.

One of the ways I feel I accomplished

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Vince Alfonso Jr. is a 40-year, golf-industry veteran, president of Alfonso Creative Enterprises Inc., and owner/PGA professional at Kimberling Golf Course near Branson, Mo. He can be reached at 417-739-4370.



Jack Nicklaus

venture includes: Ira Fenton, president of Golden Bear Financial Services; Tim Kenny, senior vice president of business development of Golden Bear International; Tom Bennison, senior vice president of new business for CCA; and Dave Richey, senior vice president of development for CCA.

The joint venture's first project is The Golden Bear Golf Club at LionsGate in Overland Park, Kan. A

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Alfonso

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this sounds silly, but worked. I thought they would get a laugh out of me trying to pronounce their names without their assistance. I was even bold enough to call them to our front counter over the PA system, just like everyone else. Lucky for me, they loved it.

I also served them "Mini

dogs of Benihana". I would throw little hot dogs into the air over my flat grill in the snack bar and then, using a Japanese knife, I would slice them in half in mid-air. They thought that was hilarious.

You see, even though we couldn't communicate fluently in each others language, we established a positive rapport which they enjoyed and which

brought them back week after week. They never knew what I was going to do next.

In other words, I didn't and my staff didn't, just, "Takea Veesa". We were not just greens fee takers.

However, let's be quite frank. We all know greens fee takers are prolific in our industry. You know the type. These are human beings who stand behind

counters in golf shops across America taking greens fee dollars and doing little else. They have little or no interaction with their customers.

And to my dismay, many owners and managers allow this to happen. When asked why they allow this behavior, they say, "he or she is dependable and honest and that's good enough for me".

I would like to challenge you at this point by saying, it shouldn't be good enough for you. Sure, you're taking in greens fees, but, you're missing a great chance to endear your customers to your course. I know one owner who says, "if all you want is a greens fee taker, get a box with a slit in the top and a lock on the side. Now, that's a greens fee taker."

We bill Kimberling Golf Course as the most entertaining and challenging nine holes in Missouri. If you read my column regularly, you know we do a lot to literally get customers laughing before they ever hit their first shot. The course takes care of the "challenging" claim all by itself. It's a 2100-yard, par-34. And, believe it or not, you cannot see the greens from the tees on any of the 7 par 4's.

Now, because Kimberling City is a resort community near Branson, Mo., we see many first-time guests. I knew from the start I had to create something innovative to help our guests get around our course without shooting a million. I had to create something for my staff and me to help them find their way around our course.

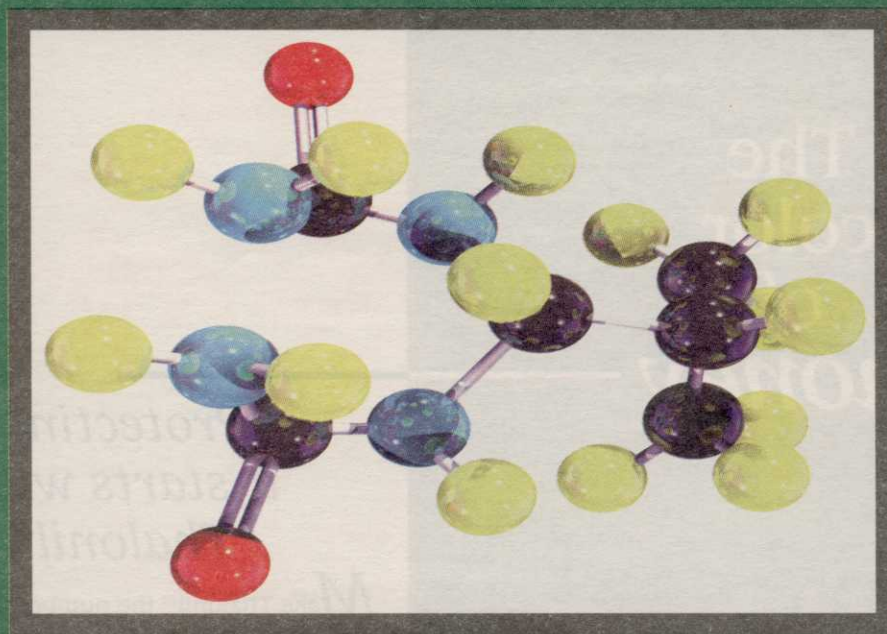
Thus was born color-coded landing area circles. These landing-area circles serve to guide our first-time golfer in both direction and distance off every tee. The circles are noted on the score card and inside each circle I have placed the exact yardage information from the middle of the red tee to the middle of the landing area.

Our landing-area circles are 50 feet in radius, irrigated and mowed differently than the rest of our course. All first circles have a yellow pendant in the center, second landing area circles have a gold pendant in the center and our third landing area circle on No. 7 has a reddish orange pendant at it's center.

I have a sample of our system on the Cayman practice range which is easy to see from our golf shop. This gives our staff a chance to communicate valuable, helpful information to our first-time customers right at the front counter. From the second they walk in, we are making them laugh and helping them out. I believe that taking this approach communicates to them, very clearly, that we are not just here to "Takea Veesa."

Our little landing-area circle explanation says we appreciate them coming to see us and we're trying to do all we can to help them have a great time.

Dependability and honesty are essential characteristics for any employee. But, with your help, they can do and be much more.



TO YOUR TURF, THIS IS A POWER LUNCH.

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