

BRIEFS



**CROWN GOLF OPENS TWO**

GLENVIEW, Ill.—Crown Golf opened two new courses in October; South Mountain Golf Course in Draper, Utah and River Valley Ranch Golf Course in Carbondale, Colo. South Mountain, which was designed by David Graham and Gary Panks, is located on rugged, mountainous terrain 30 minutes south of Salt Lake City. In contrast, River Valley Ranch, near Aspen, Colo., was built in a river valley with 13,000-foot Mt. Sopris in the background. Jay Morrish designed the 18-hole championship course.

**MATRIX ADDS CUTCHINS**

WILLIAMSBURG, Va.—Beverly Cutchins has been named vice president of Golf Business Advisors, a Matrix Golf and Hospitality company based here. Cutchins has more than 15 years of experience in the private club and resort sports sector. Prior to joining Golf Business Advisors, she had been with Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg. In addition to assisting Golf Business Advisors with its current consulting services, Cutchins will bring additional consulting assistance to clients in the areas of membership, spa, fitness, tennis and resort programming.



Beverly Cutchins

**GMG GROWS PORTFOLIO**

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Golf Management Group has signed a management agreement with Old Hickory Country Club. Nashville-based GMG now manages the turfcare operations at four courses, two in Nashville and two in suburban Hendersonville. Golf Management Group is an affiliate of Edwin B. Raskin Co., a Brentwood-based 44-year-old, real-estate investment, management and development company that began golf management activities in 1981.

**GOLDEN BEAR PROMOTES O'BRIEN**

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla.—Golden Bear Golf, Inc. has promoted Andrew O'Brien to vice president/marketing. In his new role, O'Brien will be responsible for marketing, licensing and branding of the Golden Bear name and implementation of the company's tactical marketing plans for 1999, as well as for helping to develop new business opportunities in this area.

**Forecaddies making a comeback at Marriott**

By JOHN TORSIELLO

An innovative forecaddie program at the Seaview Marriott Resort in Galloway, N.J. has been such a success that the company is considering expanding the program to other Marriott-owned courses.

Rob Bartley, director of golf at Seaview, located near Atlantic City, said the feedback from golfers playing the resort's two courses—The Pines and The Bay Course—has been "98 percent positive" in the program's first year.

The unique aspect of Seaview's caddie program is that the service is mandatory, making it one of the few resorts where golfers must be accompanied by a forecaddie. Bartley said Seaview's program was patterned after a similar program at Coeur D'Alene Resort Golf Course in Idaho. The price of a forecaddie is included in a golfer's greens fees. Tips—the club recommends at least \$10 per bag—are encouraged.

"The forecaddie program has been a way for us to differentiate ourselves from other courses in the area," said Bartley. "It's been a huge success in its first year. We think of our forecaddies as on-course concierges. No other employee spends as much time



Forecaddies at the Seaview Marriott Resort in Galloway, N.J.

with the customer as they do. There is certainly a potential that it can be molded to other Marriott facilities."

Brendan Lenihan, director of guest services at Coeur D'Alene, said that resort's mandatory forecaddie program, now in its eighth year, has been popular among golfers.

"I think the program has been successful because it is mandatory and not optional. I don't know if it would work if golfers had a choice," he said.

Lenihan said forecaddies have positively affected speed of play at Coeur

Continued on page 79

**UCA, Palmer join forces to build network of U.S. university clubs**

By ANDREW OVERBECK

COLUMBIA, S.C. — University Clubs of America (UCA) and Arnold Palmer Golf Management have formed an exclusive joint venture to develop and operate university- and college-affiliated golf clubs across the United States. The UCA-Palmer collaboration began Oct. 21, with its first course here at the University of South Carolina.

According to E. Linwood Johnson, President of UCA, this partnership will be the first step in a major expansion for UCA, which builds customized golf courses and themed clubs to suit the needs of individual colleges and universities, which in turn offer memberships exclusively to their alumni and university supporters. Terms of the partnership state that all participating clubs will bear the UCA brand and be managed by Palmer Golf.

"UCA's resource is club design, marketing and its ability to cater to the needs of individual universities," said Peter Nanula, president and chief executive officer of Palmer Golf. "They're niche experts. This partnership brings together the best

Continued on page 82

**K-State's management program draws students**

MANHATTAN, Kan.— Kansas State University's golf course management program is up and drawing attention from not only students, but from other universities as well, said Jack Fry, associate professor of horticulture, forestry and recreation.

"Our golf course management program is the first of its kind to shift emphasis to business and other academics. Most other programs just offer the traditional turfgrass management program," Fry said.

Offered as a new option under K-State's horticulture major, the golf course management program focuses on more than how to get and maintain the optimum playing surface. It also covers all aspects of managing an 18-hole course, including business, hospitality and food-service operations.

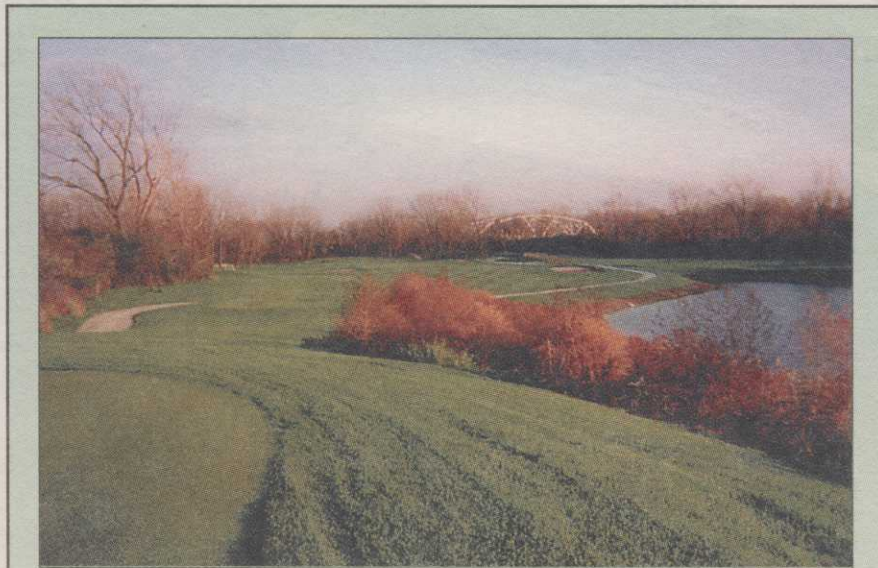
"The program was developed with help from experienced golf course superintendents, who emphasized that skills students can develop in business, communications and personnel management are as important as the education they receive in plant and soil sciences," Fry said.

"The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and the PGA Tour are advisers to the program and are working with us in structuring internships and evaluating the program's effectiveness in educating the next generation of golf course superintendents and facility professionals," he said.

"Enrollment has been good. We have nearly 40 students, including several students from out-of-state and K-State students who switched their majors when the program became available," Fry said.

That's what Jonathan Bakalar did. The junior from Charlotte, N.C., was majoring in business, but switched when the golf course management option became available. "I've been playing golf since I was a little kid. I love it," he said. "I want to be a golf course superintendent or be a

Continued on page 82



**KEMPER GROWS ILLINI PORTFOLIO**

NORTHBROOK, Ill.—Kemper Sports Management has signed a three-year agreement with the Village of Worth to manage Water's Edge Golf Club. The course is scheduled to open in May. Kemper begins operations immediately. Built alongside the Cal Sag Channel in Worth, Water's Edge is located 15 miles from the heart of downtown Chicago with lush natural grasses, protected wetlands and dense forest. A highlight of the 18-hole championship course is the 10th hole, a par-4 that sits high above the course and offers a beautiful view of 14 other holes. Water's Edge also features a driving range, clubhouse, pro-shop, and full-service restaurant.

## Forecaddies

Continued from page 77

D'Alene. "Five hours a round is the norm at resort courses. Here, it's 4:17 a round. With forecaddies, we don't need marshals out on the course. They move play along."

The Seaview program is run by Caddie Masters Enterprises of Fairfax, Va. Caddie manager Kieran Bell said the forecaddies serve a variety of purposes.

"The forecaddies certainly affect speed of play," he said. "They have a local knowledge of the course. They go out ahead of the foursome to spot balls so you eliminate a lot of time spent hunting for stray shots." The caddies also give yardages, rake bunkers, clean clubs, fix ball marks and read greens.

Bell said the Seaview program "is the first time forecaddies have been marketed to a great extent." He added that feedback from players has been positive. The club has rating cards that golfers fill out concerning the performance of their forecaddie and that 90 percent of the ratings have been excellent.

When Seaview went to a cart path only rule on its Pines Course, officials worried about speed of play. The forecaddies have eliminated that fear, said Bartley.

"We were worried that the cart path only rule would add three quarters of an hour to rounds on The Pines Course. But with the forecaddies, the average round

has not gone up significantly."

Beyond the speed of play issue, Bartley said the forecaddies have brought smiles to the resort's maintenance crews.

"The maintenance people are kissing my feet," he said with a chuckle. "Having forecaddies raking bunkers and fixing ball marks on greens really has improved course conditions on a day to day basis."

Bartley said Seaview adopted a mandatory forecaddie program for several reasons.

"We wanted to make the program an added plus for golfers here. And, it just wouldn't have worked had we allowed golfers to an option. What if the foursome ahead of you didn't have a forecaddie and you did. It would have made for some uncomfortable moments on the course."

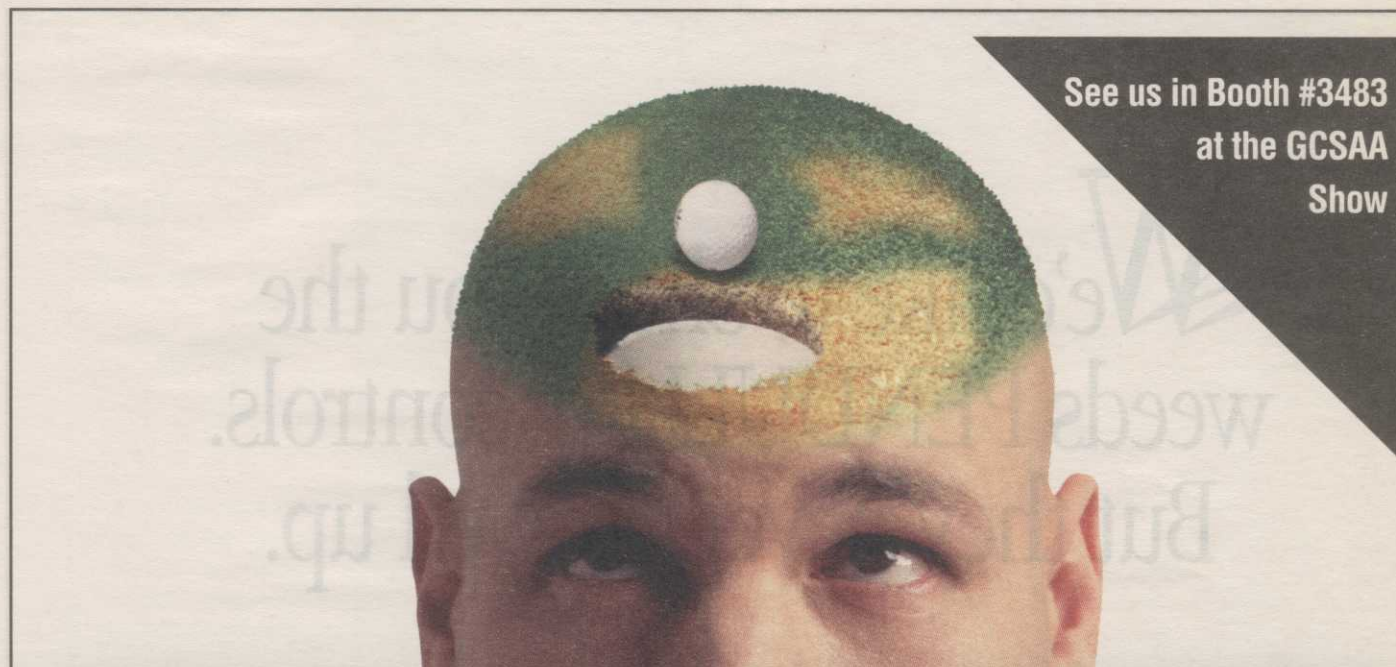
Seaview toyed with the idea of installing laser yardage finders in its golf carts. "But that just didn't fit with what Seaview is. We wanted a person dealing with the customer and that's what the forecaddies do for us."

Bartley said that while he has fielded some complaints about mandatory use of forecaddies, the vast majority of comments have been favorable.

"I've had a few people say they didn't want a forecaddie because they weren't comfortable having somebody watch them play," said Bartley. "But the majority of people have enjoyed the experience."

Bartley said some 1,200 people were interviewed for the Seaview program with 275 hired.

"The biggest challenge we have is maintaining a consistency among our caddies."



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## Hirsh/REITS

Continued from page 79

businesses) goes in cycles. With such a low percentage of golf courses under professional management, it would seem that there are many opportunities. Can the golf boom bust? Some say when the economy slows down the leisure dollar will be the first affected. This is tempered by those that note the extended period of time needed to add to the supply of golf courses where there aren't now enough. Nobody knows. If you're a golf course owner looking to sell, examine any proposals carefully and make sure it's right for you. If you're a buyer in the golf course market, plan on competing with 'the big boys.'

## Meditrust

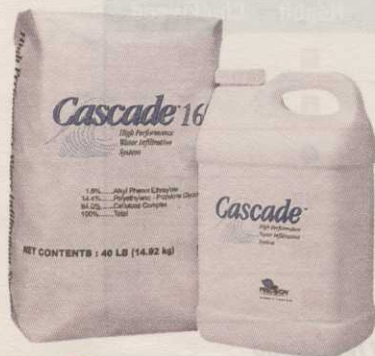
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they got confusing to the market and analysts. They were initially a health-care REIT, then they started buying hotels, then they bought this golf company. So they have these three different businesses operating within Meditrust right now. The stock market is saying 'Get out of the health-care and golf business and go back to being a core, middle-market hotel company.'

Meditrust plans to sell up to \$1 billion of assets, including Cobblestone and Santa Anita, to pay down about \$525 million in debt, the *Union-Tribune* reported.

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