

BRIEFS



NEW GM AT ROYAL MELBOURNE

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — W. Paul Pearce has been named to succeed Paul V. Blaze as general manager at Royal Melbourne Country Club in Long Grove, Ill., a Kemper Sports Management golf facility. Blaze is joining Kemper Sports' home office as vice president of operations. Prior to joining Royal Melbourne, Pearce was general manager of The Meadow Club in Rolling Meadows, Ill. Previously, he served as general manager at English Turn Golf and Country Club in New Orleans and general manager/regional manager at Brookhaven Country Club in Dallas. Pearce is an active member of the Club Managers Association of America, Greater Chicago Club Managers Association, and United States Golf Association. He is a graduate of Austin College and earned his master's degree at Texas Christian University.

NGP BUYS ONE, SELLS ONE

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — National Golf Properties (NGP) has acquired Coyote Lakes Golf Club, an 18-hole, daily-fee facility located in a northwest suburb of Phoenix, for approximately \$4.1 million, NGP also sold Crescent Oaks Country Club in Tarpon Springs, Fla., to a local investor for approximately \$1.5 million.



NEW COMPANIES ADDED TO VGM MANUFACTURERS LIST

WATERLOO, Iowa — VGM Golf Inc., a major buying alliance for golf courses, has added several new companies to its list of 120 participating manufacturers. Among the new firms are Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products, a manufacturer of golf course maintenance equipment; The VGM Technologies, a telecommunications consulting service; The Kennon Group Audit Co., a utility bill auditing firm based in Stillwater, Okla.; ECO Golf Tee Co., manufacturers of environmentally friendly golf tees; and Maruyama U.S. Inc., Group, a quality brand power tool line based in Richmond Wash. The National Golf Foundation and VGM have formed an agreement in which the NGF's golf facility members can get a discounted membership to VGM, and vice-versa.

Software links courses, travel companies

PHOENIX — More than 400 courses have signed on with GolfSwitch, a recently introduced tee time software system that allows individuals and companies to book tee times at multiple golf courses using a variety of automated reservation systems.



GolfSwitch software enables airlines, central reservation systems, tour operators, hotels, golf vacation companies, travel agents and Internet users to make tee times at any course using one of 16 different automated tee time reservation systems including Computer Golf Systems, T-Links, Smyth Systems, Tee Master, Fore Reservation Systems and Fairway Systems.

GolfSwitch can be integrated into the tee time reservation system's software, meaning course owners need not worry about which of the 16 reservation systems they choose.

Likewise, marketing partners such as airlines, hotels and golf vacation packagers can easily install GolfSwitch into their operations. America West Golf Vacations, Delta Golf Vacations, Pam's Golf, Resort Suites of Scottsdale, the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas and the PGA of America's PGA.com are among the travel and Internet partners using GolfSwitch software.

GolfSwitch displays up to seven differ-

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Chestatee Golf Club in Dawsonville, Ga., a Signet property.

Signet extending Southern reach

By PETER BLAIS

SALISBURY, N.C. — Signet Golf Associates has signed a management contract with Crescent Golf Club here, giving the Pinehurst, N.C.-based firm five properties in its growing portfolio. Signet will operate the John LaFoy-designed layout for owner Bill Kubly, president of Landscapes Unlimited, a major golf course construction firm.

"We hope we can do a good job for him," said Signet principal Peter Dejak, noting that Kubly has an ownership interest in a dozen courses nationwide. "It could mean some future business."

Dejak and partner Barry Embler founded Pinehurst, N.C.-based Signet in March 1996. The two had worked for Legacy Golf Management, an Atlanta development firm previously located in Pinehurst. Dejak's background is in agronomy and construction, while Embler's is in finance and operations.

"We had a lot of in-the-trenches experience and saw a need for a company where the principals were actually doing the work," Dejak said. "Many companies hire professionals to handle different divisions. What makes us unique is that we handle everything."

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CMAA SHOW COMING UP

ATLANTA — The Club Managers Association of America will hold its 73rd Annual Conference on Club Management and 23rd Annual Exposition at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis and Georgia World Congress Center here on Feb. 20-24, 2000. Plans call for pre- and post-conference workshops, more than 100 educational sessions and golf tournaments. For more information, contact 703-739-9500.

Troon adds, promotes key personnel

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Troon Golf has promoted several existing personnel and added additional members to its corporate staff.

Within Troon Golf's corporate office in Scottsdale, Gloria McKee was promoted from assistant vice president to vice president, human resources. McKee will continue her efforts to support the staff through the development of new systems and resources in order to handle Troon's continued growth. Prior to joining Troon,

McKee was the director of human resources for Robinson's May department stores.

Newly appointed at the corporate office is Charlene Lowry, vice president, procurement. Lowry leaves the Getty's Group, a Chicago-based design and purchasing company, where she was the director of purchasing. Lowry will be responsible for vendor relations, purchasing initiatives and price negotiations for all Troon facilities.

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ClubCorp, Golden Bear team up on Georgia acquisition

DALLAS — A joint venture involving ClubCorp and Golden Bear International, Inc. has acquired Laurel Springs Golf Club in Suwanee, Ga.

Located 27 miles north of Atlanta, Laurel Springs features a Jack Nicklaus Signature Course and an award-winning 8,100-square foot clubhouse. Opened in 1998, the golf club lists 300 members.

"Laurel Springs complements the clubs that we have in the Atlanta area," said Dave Richey, senior vice president of development of ClubCorp.

Other ClubCorp golf properties in the area include Eagle's Landing Country Club, Northwood Country Club and Trophy Club of Gwinnett. The company also owns and operates three business clubs in Atlanta: Ravinia Club, Buckhead Club and One Ninety One Club.



ACQUISITIONS



## Signet

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"We have superintendents, golf professionals and food and beverage people. But we handle day-to-day operations and construction ourselves. That's where we thought we could be different. We're not only the guys who sell the management contract to clients, but also meet with the clients on a daily basis."

Rocky River Golf Club at Concord (N.C.) was the company's first development/management contract. Signet built and manages the 18-hole, Dan Maples-designed municipal course that opened in September 1997.

"We lease equipment, so we're not a true construction company," Dejak said. "We do some construction management and do a lot of the work in house."

Signet began overseeing the grow-in of Chestatee Golf Club in Dawsonville, Ga., last November and assumed management when the Denis Griffiths-designed course opened this June. Signet became construction manager at Bear Creek Golf Club in Douglasville, Ga., last June and will assume the operational reins when the Integrated Golf Services-designed layout opens in April. The firm also has a seasonal management contract with Bayonet at Puppy Creek in Raeford, N.C.

## Troon

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Dan Budzius has been named area managing director for the Rocky Mountain Region and facility manager for The Ridge Course at Castle Pines North. Budzius leaves his position as director of golf for the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort in San Antonio, Texas, bringing with him an extensive background in sales and marketing. Prior to San Antonio, Budzius served as the general manager at Bridlewood Country Club in Dallas.

Scott Tuggle and Ed Shimkus will each fill the newly created position of senior agronomist. Tuggle and Shimkus are responsible for solidifying and maintaining the agronomic standards for all Troon properties.

Kathy Grayson leaves her position as assistant director, group sales at Troon North Golf Club to join Troon Golf's marketing and sales department as sales manager. Grayson's 15 years experience in the golf and special events industry include facilities such as The Westin Innisbrook Resort, the PGA of America, the United States Olympics and Desert Highlands Golf Club. Grayson's duties include management of Troon Golf's individual and group database, trade show representation and spearheading the Scottsdale hotel group sales effort.

Signet believes its strength lies in combining development and management. "We can develop and open a golf course," Dejak said. "Many owners don't understand how complicated opening a course is. The gray area between construction and opening is an intensive transition period that can make or break you during that first couple years."

"Marketing, preparing your staff, customer service, establishing policies and procedures

and grow-in are all complicated. That's a strong part of our portfolio. That three-month period before opening is a real important step in introducing the course to the public."

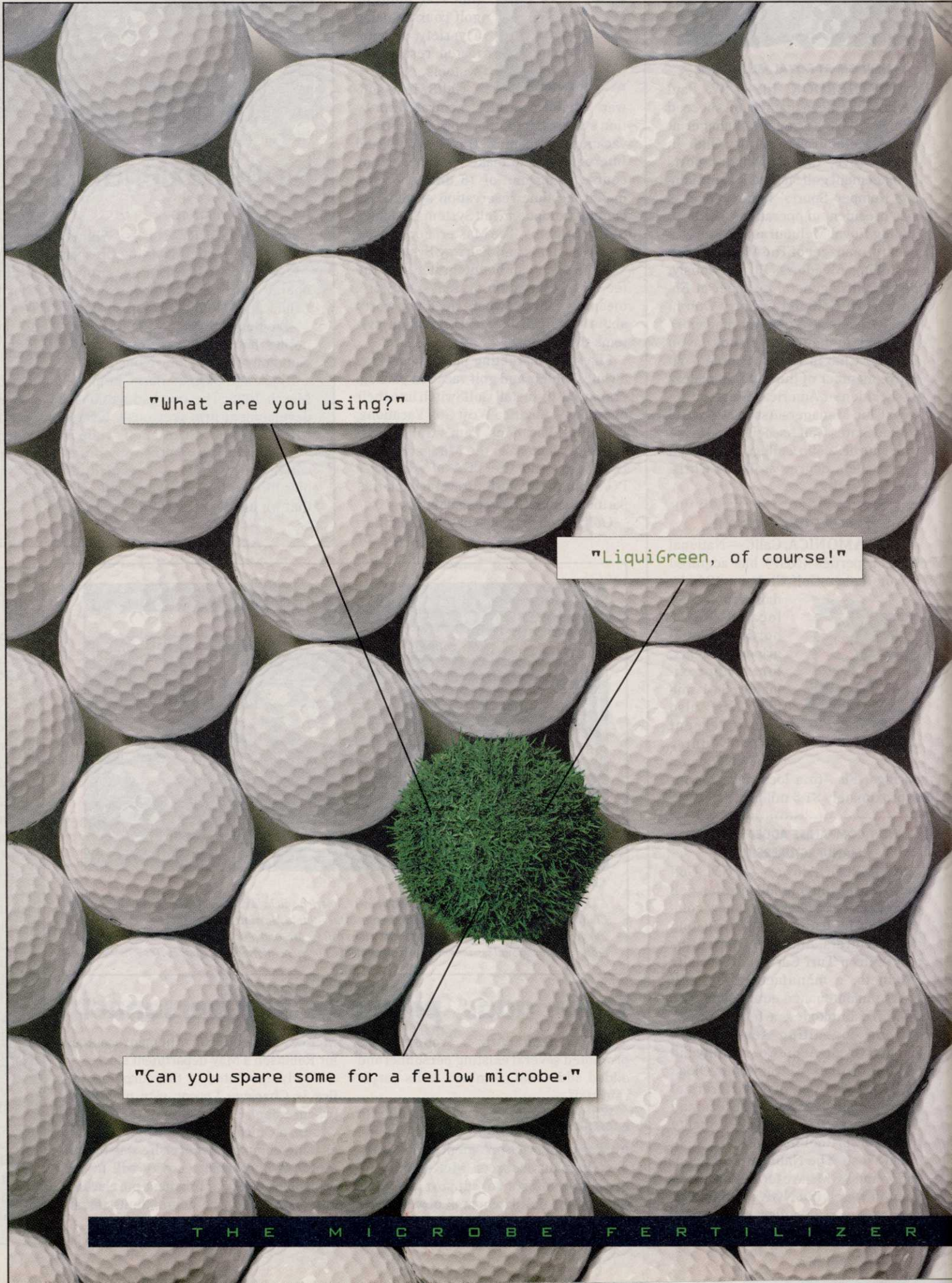
Signet also does feasibility studies, consulting and renovation work. The firm recently completed a driving range and tee renovation at Cabarrus Country Club in Concord, N.C. and a drainage renovation project at Whispering

Pines Country Club in Pinehurst.

Dejak said the firm would like to add a couple courses annually to its management portfolio while maintaining a hands-on approach to daily operations. "We're targeting the Charlotte, N.C., Pinehurst and Atlanta markets primarily as far as new management contracts. We want to hire people, like superintendents, who could make the transition to a regional person overseeing two or three courses

while working with a professional at each facility... We think that [adding two courses annually] is a growth rate that allows us to maintain quality levels. There are a lot of management companies out there, but the firms that control growth and quality are the ones that will survive."

So far, Signet has concentrated on management contracts. But the company is also looking into acquiring facilities, Dejak said.



"What are you using?"

"LiquiGreen, of course!"

"Can you spare some for a fellow microbe."

T H E M I C R O B E F E R T I L I Z E R