

BRIEFS



ELDREDGE JOINING RAINMAKER

COLUMBIA, Md. — Paul Eldredge, who retired in December as president of Wadsworth Golf Construction Co., will join The Rainmaker Group, a golf course and residential development concern, as a principal. Eldredge will serve part-time as executive vice president, assuming business development and project management responsibilities on both golf and residential projects. He worked 37 years for Wadsworth and was involved in building more than 500 golf courses around the country. "After nearly 40 years in construction, I wanted to take a broader role in development," Eldredge said.



Paul Eldredge

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SASSER JOINS WEITZ

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Weitz Golf International has hired Warren T. "Tommy" Sasser as vice president of marketing. Sasser's primary responsibility will be to direct the company's golf course construction marketing efforts. Prior to joining Weitz Golf, Sasser was president of GolfDevelopment Consultants. Sasser is on the board of directors of the Golf Course Builders Association of America, and is a member of the National Golf Foundation, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Urban Land Institute and Society of American Foresters.

PHELPS LANDS VAIL JOB

VAIL, Colo. — The Eagle Vail Metro District has received \$3.5 million of bond financing for improvements to the Eagle-Vail golf course. The golf course design firm of Richard M. Phelps, Ltd. has been asked to plan significant improvements, including new tees, greens, sand and grass bunkers and irrigation. The goal is to make the course stand out in Vail valley's competitive market. It is expected to take three to four years to complete the job, not including the work currently under construction at the practice range. The remodeled practice range includes a new 10,000-square-foot putting green, 5,000-square-foot chipping green, 30-station tee line; two new grass tees and target greens.



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The par-3 15th hole at Whispering Pines Golf Club plays with a prevailing crosswind and will stretch from a gentle 96 yards to 178 yards from the back tee.

Texans making dream come true for kids, amateurs — themselves

By FRANCES G. TRIMBLE

Corby Robertson and Chris Gilbert are two friends and veterans of the University of Texas football wars who, as college juniors, dreamed of opening a summer sports camp for kids. Camp Olympia, where children gain new athletic skills in a natural environment, opened in 1968 with 86 campers. The camp, which has always featured an introduction to golf, now serves over 8,000 youngsters each summer. The camp's success does not mean that Robertson and Gilbert

gave up dreaming.

Recently the two announced their latest vision:

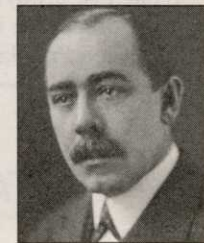
- Whispering Pines Golf Club, 18-holes built on "a very special" 400-acre tract of land about 90 miles north of Houston, in Trinity County, Texas, next door to Camp Olympia.
- World Health & Golf Association, a not-for-profit corporation whose beneficiaries are the world-renowned Texas Medical Center Institutions and a First Tee Program for 5,000 fifth-

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Fledgling Tillinghast Association growing

By MARK LESLIE

BASKING RIDGE, N.J. — Their two books on A.W. Tillinghast were hits, now Bob Trebus and Richard and Stuart Wolffe have formed the Tillinghast Association, creating a web site and newsletter as well as a repository for information on the famed golf course architect.



A.W. Tillinghast

"When we published the first two books ["Course Beautiful" and "Reminiscences of the Links"], we found that there is a great interest in Tillinghast," said Trebus, who is the association's first president. "There is a Donald Ross Society. And, especially at Pinehurst during the U.S. Open, Ross was getting a lot of recognition, so we thought Tillinghast should get just as much."

The designer of such highly regarded tracks as Winged Foot's East and West Courses, San Francisco Golf Club and Quaker Ridge Golf Course, Tillinghast was a prolific writer. While researching a book for the 100th anniversary of their club — Baltusrol Golf Club — Trebus and the Wolfes discovered enough fodder on its designer, Tillinghast, to publish their two books — with a third waiting in the wings.

Tillinghast's interesting treatises will also

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Nancy Lopez aims for name in 2nd career: design

In her rookie season on the LPGA, in 1977-78, Nancy Lopez won nine tournaments, including five in a row and setting a standard for winning that has not been equaled since. Elected into the LPGA Hall of Fame in 1987 at the age of 30, she is still active on the Tour, but has set her sights on a new challenge: golf course design. Working with her agent, IMG, she has launched Nancy Lopez Course Design and is already awaiting contracts for two projects. In the meantime, she has been selected to receive the prestigious Old Tom Morris Award in February from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Editor Mark Leslie found her



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Nancy Lopez on a golf course site with IMG lead architect Brit Stenson.

during one of her few quiet moments at home in Albany, Ga., where she lives with her husband, former Major League player Ray Knight, three daughters, stepson Brooks, three dogs and three cats.

GCN: Part of the Old Tom Morris Award is to acknowledge your helping to "mold the welfare of the game." How do you feel you have done that?

Lopez: It's difficult for me to talk about myself, but character and sportsmanship have always been important to me. You can always be a good player, but if you're

a jerk it's not worth it; you've not accomplished what you should have because golf is a gentleman's sport. It is a game that tests you, that builds your character. I've always totally respected

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Architects society plans remodeling seminars

The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) has created a series of golf course remodeling seminars under the title of "Remodeling University: A Short Course to a Better Course." The one-day symposiums have been created to educate golf course decision-makers about the basics of remodeling.

The inaugural event will take place in Chicago at North Shore Country Club on Jan. 28. Similar programs will be held in Atlanta (Atlanta Athletic Club, March 2); New York (Westchester Country Club,

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PURGATORY GOLF CLUB... IT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD

Purgatory Golf Club in Noblesville, Ind., designed by Ron Kern, is nearing completion in this Indianapolis suburb, and opening day is targeted for late spring. See story, page 36.

Texans eye amateurs

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graders participating in Houston Independent School District's Outdoor Education Program;

• The Spirit, a made-for-TV amateur golf event, featuring a rainbow of national champions from sixty countries, to be played at Whispering Pines in October 2001.

Whispering Pines Golf Club is scheduled to open in March 2000.

Corby Robertson says that he and Gilbert always intended for the layout to be "memorable and revered," as is Marvin Leonard's Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, Texas. They also hope it will become the stuff of legends, like James Tufts and Donald Ross' Pinehurst #2, William Fownes' Oakmont, or George A. Crump's Pine Valley.

In reality, many golf projects start with high hopes only to be sidetracked by land plans for housing developments or bottom lines. There are, however, similarities in this Texas project and the story of how Pinehurst #2 grew out of one man's vision and devotion to amateurism another's creativity.

For instance, the Robertson and Gilbert course is built among tall loblolly pines and stately oaks, over rolling hills, crossed by meandering creeks. The land is somewhat similar in look and feel to the sandhills of North Carolina. The designer hired to make the Texans' dream a reality — Chet Williams of Golden Bear Designs — says that Whispering Pines will have "interesting and challenging putting surfaces that "take full advantage of the natural shape and contour of the land."

Like James Tufts, Corby Robertson had already laid out some holes on the property prior to hiring an architect. Chris Gilbert says that visitors were invited to play a game called "olf," as in golf without the "g" and without "real greens." When the Texans consulted an architect, their routing passed muster while Tufts' holes were totally re-vamped by Donald Ross.

Golden Bear's Chet Williams acknowledges only minor alterations. "I basically added variety and challenge with green design. The greens range in size from 4,300 square feet to 9,000 square feet and range in contour from gentle to significant." Williams, who first saw the acreage in 1994, admits he was lucky to be selected as architect. "Opportunities such as this don't come along often," he says. "This 7,300 yards layout was built just for golf and the plan took full advantage of the areas' sandy hills and natural features. Caney Creek, which runs along the perimeter of the property, and Lake Livingston are part of the

scenery on the last seven holes."

Now, with the scheduled opening only months away, Corby Robertson and Chris Gilbert have announced plans to give their "labor of love" to charity. In 1999, the Texans created the World Health & Golf Association — to "enhance human health and understanding" for that purpose.

The World Health & Golf Association will raise funds via individual, corporate, and charitable memberships and "donors" will automatically become members of Whispering Pines and will be able to access the course between Oct. 1 and May 20, except for tournament dates set aside for The Spirit or other competitive events. During the summer months, Whispering Pines' 18 championship holes, plus a three-hole teach-

ing and practice facility, will provide a golf foundation for campers as well as the 5,000 fifth grade students participating in a First Tee program supervised by PGA and LPGA professionals.

The third week of October, 2001, Whispering Pines will become a world golf venue and Camp Olympia will become a village and home to golf's greatest amateurs, men and women invited to compete individually and

as teams. The resulting television production will be packaged for broadcast worldwide. Funds collected via donation or sale of the TV package will support not only the Texas Medical Center and First Tee program but also will be distributed to the sponsoring golf associations of each nation to help defray travel costs.

Corby Robertson and Chris Gilbert's dream of a world united

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Renovation seminars

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March 17); and Los Angeles (Riviera Country Club, April 12).

ASGCA President John LaFoy will headline each event and will be joined at each venue by a panel of ASGCA architects. Among those slated to speak are past presidents Ed Seay (Chicago), Mike Hurdzan (New York), and Arthur Hills (Atlanta).

"Remodeling University is a must for anyone seeking to understand the basics of the

remodeling process," said LaFoy. "Whether it's keeping up with technology or the competition, most clubs will consider a remodeling project ... in the next few years. While there are no universal solutions with golf courses, Remodeling University will help public and private course representatives ask the right questions in this process."

The accredited panel at each venue will discuss many remodeling and restoration issues such as the basics of remodeling; budgeting and planning; and the roles and responsibilities of the golf course archi-

tect, superintendent and green committee.

The ASGCA is working with the Chicago District Golf Association, Georgia State Golf Association, Metropolitan Golf Association and Southern California Golf Association to co-sponsor and stage the events.

People may get registration forms from the ASGCA, 221 North LaSalle St., Suite 3600, Chicago, Ill. 60601, or register online from the ASGCA web site at www.golfdesign.org. For additional information, contact Tony Hourston at 312-372-7090, or via e-mail at asgca@selz.com. ▶

Tillinghast Assn.

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be featured on the association's web page: <http://tillinghast.net>. Along with those entries will be articles written by members.

"When we visit Tillinghast courses we will write about them and invite others to write as well," Trebus said. "A lot of people are restoring Tillinghast courses and writing about their projects."

By word of mouth, the association already has more than 70 members, Trebus said. Richard Wolffe is the vice president and Stuart, his son, vice president of research.

They are planning their first meeting for sometime this fall at either Shawnee Country Club in Pennsylvania or Bethpage State Park in New York. Shawnee was Tillinghast's first design and Bethpage's three courses were among his last.

Asked what he most admires about Tillinghast, Trebus said: "He was a real traditionalist. He was not gimmicky at all. He rewarded for a good shot and penalized for a bad shot, but not severely. Tillinghast courses have wide fairways with entranceways to the green. You stray and you're hitting over trouble to the green. He knew how to use trees — for the game, not as markers... And he used bunkers for strategic golf."

Membership is tied to the two books TreeWolf Productions has published on Tillinghast. A third book, "*Gleanings by the Wayside*," is due out by the end of 2000 or early 2001.

Growth of the association "just seems to be happening," Trebus said. "We developed this web site. People are telling other people and they are asking to join. If you own both books you get a free membership. If not, you buy them."

To join, people should contact e-mail: btrebus@bellatlantic.net.

Texans & youths

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by golf may seem far-fetched at first blush. However, the two have proven track records with ventures where everyone seems to win. One is Camp Olympia. Another is Davenport Ranch in Austin, Texas, where Robertson and his sister Beth Robertson Morian built high-end housing, Austin Country Club's excellent Pete Dye course, and Wild Basin, a nature preserve created with donated land. For three generations, the Robertson family has supported the Texas Medical Center's programs for international health care, teaching programs, and research. ▶

Additional information is available by calling Angela Atkins, Vice President for Development at (713) 751-7568.



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