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.

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 Golf Development 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 American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA). 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.

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 and oversee construction 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 project, without 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.

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 Wolfe have formed the Tillinghast Association, creating a web site and newsletter as well as a repository for information on the famed golf course architect.

“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 Wolfees discovered enough fodder on his design, Tillinghast, to publish their two books — with a third awaiting publication.

Tillinghast’s interesting treatises will also 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 not a joke it’s not worth it; you’re 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

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 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

Q&A

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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, April 30) and Charlotte (Tryon Country Club, May 21).

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Texans eye amateurs

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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. Therefore, 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 revamped 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 7,500 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 teaching 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 sponsoring golf associations of each nation to help defray travel costs.

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

Continued on next page

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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), Miko Hardzan (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 architect, 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 Wolfe 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

Continued from previous page
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.