

BRIEFS



ELDRIDGE 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,



Paul Eldredge

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 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."

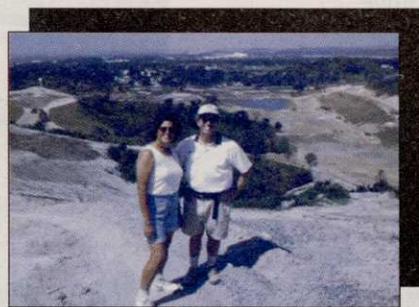
The designer of such highly regarded tracks as Winged Foot's East and West Courses, San Francisco Golf Club and Quaker Ridge Golf Course, Tillinghast was a prolific writer. While researching a book for the 100th anniversary of their club — Baltusrol Golf Club — Trebus and the Wolfes discovered enough 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



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.

Q&A with Lopez

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golf. It's a great game. Everyone can play golf — and you can play it for a long time and play it with your family. I've enjoyed playing it all my life, with my Dad and Mom growing up.

What I've always tried to do on the golf course is enjoy what I did. When I'm playing, well or

not, I'm still enjoying it. Sportsmanship has always been important to me because I know how I want to be treated if I won, or if I did not win. My Dad taught me good sportsmanship. He made me realize as long as I played my hardest, that is what people see. And they see that even if I finished second or third I never gave up. I never walked away from a golf event feeling bad.

A lot of people can't handle

SEE RELATED STORY,
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losing. They walk away feeling defeated and don't learn and rejoice from their play. Playing golf was something I enjoyed so much, and I was so grateful to God that He allows me to play this sport and to walk golf courses and enjoy it the way I do.

GCN: There are only two fe-

male members of the American Society of Golf Course Architects — Alice Dye and Jan Beljan. Why haven't there been more female golf course designers?

Lopez: Perhaps it's the credibility of a woman designing a golf course. I don't know if people have felt we could do that. I think IMG asked me to because of the competitor I have been all my career. Maybe they feel that I can develop a course that people can play and

enjoy and be competitive.

My courses won't just cater to women. They will cater to men, also — because with the different tees you can put trouble in different areas. But women want to be made to feel special, also. To do that, I will give women a back tee and a forward tee. Men usually have three tees. Let the women have a choice.

GCN: But a decade ago, Alice Dye started a campaign for forward tees and all courses now are being built with several sets of tees. You play old and new courses. Have you not seen a significant trend in course designs to shorten courses for women, youths and beginners?

Lopez: Yes, there are more tees. But I want to make sure that women feel these are "their" tees. Tell them: "These are for women only."

And put some trouble out there for the ladies, yet give them a bailing-out point. Some courses don't have any bailing-out point at all for women. They have to carry the ball 150 yards to get over water. You can build a course that has trouble and gives women a chance to go for it, but doesn't force them to. Golfers want to have to hit that great shot. They will test themselves. But there are some courses that are so tough. People play them but they walk off them frustrated and beaten; they've lost a bunch of balls, played horribly and not had fun. My objective is to build a course that is tough and yet is fun to play; it's not boring and when they walk off they can remember the golf holes.

I would like to make a couple of tough holes in a row, and then one that's easier — to give you that emotional up-and-down feeling, which is part of golf. You should be able to feel a little relief. I want to make the type of course that plays with people's emotions as much as the mental part of their game.

GCN: How involved will you be in the actual design work?

Lopez: Heavily. I will really walk the site and give them my ideas and work with Brit [Stenson, IMG's lead architect] and get his thoughts.

It will not be like Northwestern golf clubs. They built the clubs and put my name on them. I didn't really have anything to do with it. Now I have my own line of golf clubs and I did have a lot to do with it. That's what I'm doing now [in design]. I'm going to give them my ideas and learn more and more about architecture. I think it will be a great experience. But I do have a lot of pressure to design my first golf course the best that I can. I want people to walk away and say, "Boy, I can't wait until Nancy builds another one."

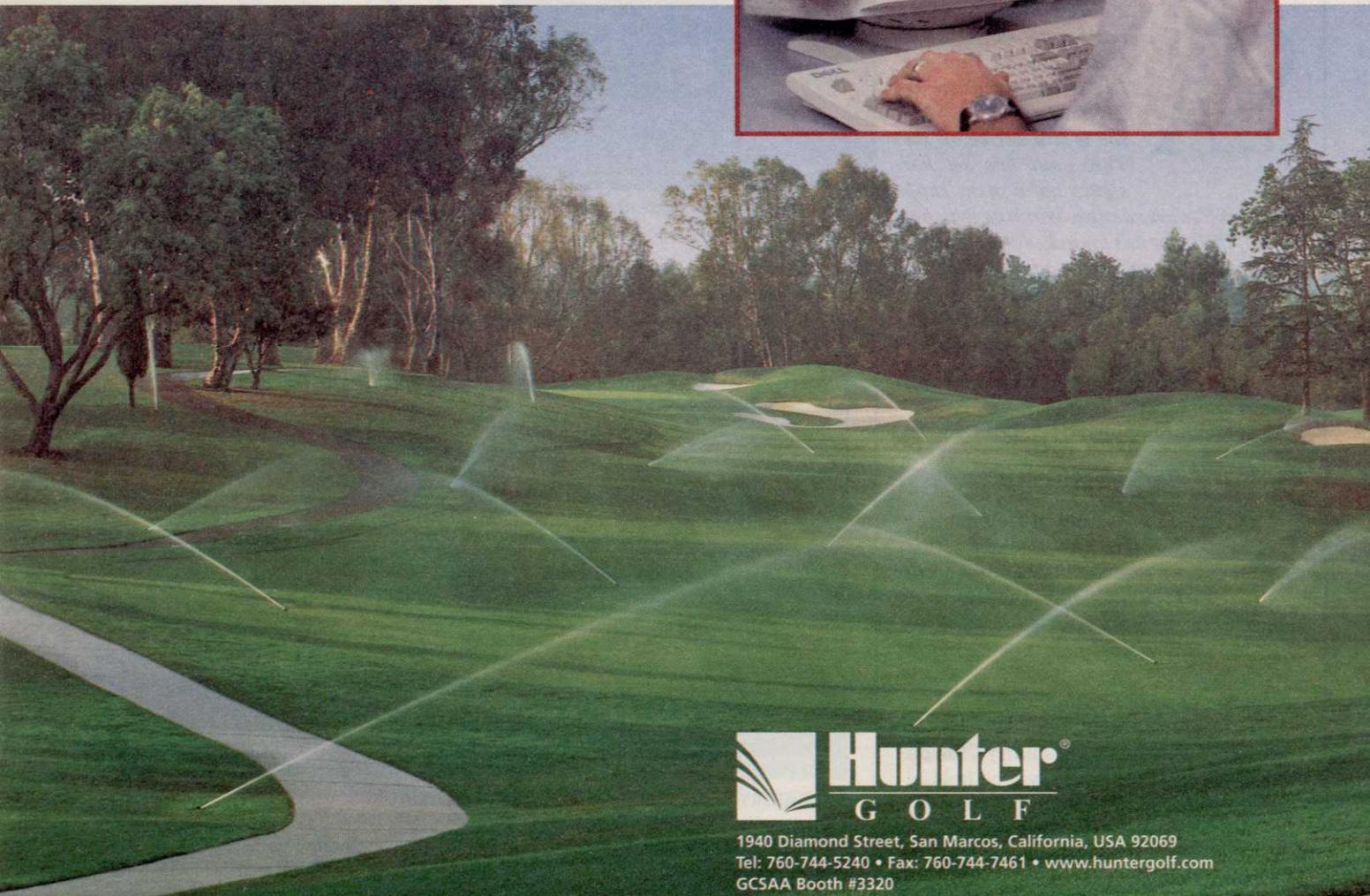
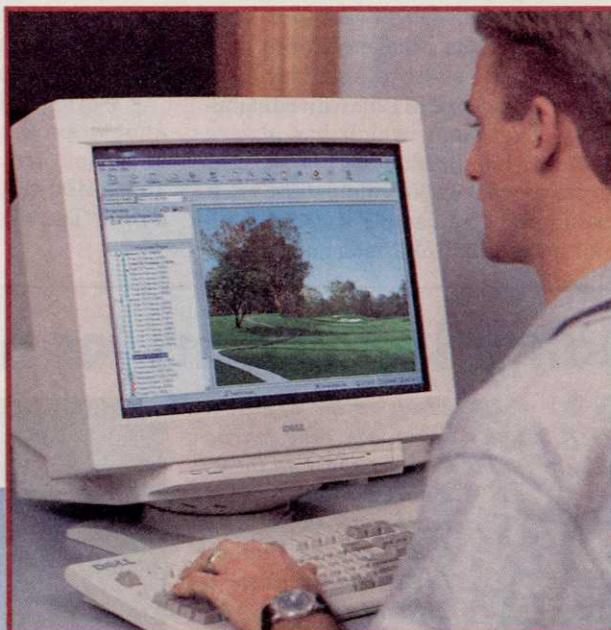
I want to be really proud of the courses I develop and bring en-

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Q&A with Lopez

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joyment to people. Even when I'm gone, they will know I loved golf that much and I cared about my fellow golfers, amateurs. I wanted to build something that they would love and enjoy playing as much as I did.

A lot of times courses are built for the professionals, and when did they ever pay a green fee? You have to build it for the people who support golf, and that's my goal: to build a course that will give them competitive feelings, they will be tested but will love and enjoy.

Another aspect is the visual. When I play courses I hate, I never play well — not because they are tough, but because they are boring or not pretty. Visually, golf can intimidate you. I want a course that intimidates people; it may not be tough, but when they look at it, it looks tough. I've played courses like that. You are intimidated by what you see. Maybe there are trees on the right or out-of-bounds on the left, and yet it is only a 100-yard carry.

GCN: What would be a good length for your two sets of women's tees?

Lopez: On the Tour we play about 6,200 yards. I'm not sure what total distance I'm looking for. I want it long, but not so long that women don't enjoy it. I want them to be able to reach par-4s in two shots. Even good amateurs struggle to reach some par-4s in two. I want the better women to have the chance to hit a driver and 5- or 6-iron into the green. That's how the pros do it. They're not hitting 3 and 4 irons into par-4s.

This is all a learning process for me. I haven't done a full-blown course yet. I've

Lopez: Youths, family, golf help one another

Pointing to the golf industry's push to open programs to get youths involved in the game, Nancy Lopez feels children and families are issues to be considered.

Youth programs, she said "are something we really need to think about. It's so important. I look at women's golf, or even collegiate golf, and you barely see any American players coming up. You see a lot of foreigners scooping up scholarships and playing for college teams. We need to develop junior golf as much as we can in the United States. You look at the women's Tour and a lot of foreigners win each week."

Meanwhile, she said, golf can be an important cog in keeping the family unit together.

"Every day everyone in my family is going 100 miles per hour. They don't have that two to three hours to go out and play on the golf course. But if I can get them all on a golf course it would be a lot of fun," Lopez said.

While her two oldest daughters — Ashley, 16, and Erinn, 13 — are softball and basketball players and not interested in golf, her youngest, 8-year-old Torri, is an avid golfer, Lopez said.

"It's not just the training of the young," she added. "We have to get the parents to support their kids. My Mom and Dad supported me 100 percent. That's why I know I got to where I am today. They spent that time, money and effort to encourage me playing golf. Nowadays, because moms do work, it's difficult."

always been the consultant. I've walked the course and suggested ladies' tees and changes. You know, "Move that tee or bunker over because it's not fair." I'll talk with Brit about that.

It's deceptive to tell you yardage because, unless you go out on the site, you don't know from where the person is hitting the 5- or 6-iron.

Golf course design is a feeling, also. It's not just looking at the course. It's what you feel when you step on the tee, what you see and what intimidates you and doesn't intimidate you. Golf is an emotional up and down all the time. I know how I felt over the years when I stepped on those tees and my emotions were up and down. I don't want it to be, simply, "Let's tee it up and go." I want them to look at everything and say, "Boy, this is a beautiful hole. I can go for this or go to the right, or reach the green in two." Give them the opportunities that the pros have.

GCN: Do you think you can relate to the amateur-caliber player?

Lopez: I think so. Growing up, playing with my Dad, I remember courses I played and what I felt and how tough a hole was. I remember those feelings of hitting over water. I want bailing-out areas to the right or left and give golfers that choice. Let them get the thrill of golf by hitting that great shot, if they choose.

GCN: There are a number of male Tour players involved in design. Why haven't you been involved before this?

Lopez: I was not interested and did not have the time. IMG knew that and did not pursue it. What got it started was a visit to Florida — to The Villages — where they build two courses a year. The developer asked if I ever thought about designing a golf course and would I design one for him. It is a beautiful area and I expect we will sign a contract. When he asked, I had not really had the time.

But I love golf and being able to build a golf course and being proud of it is something I look forward to doing. When it is

Women & golf a mutual attraction

Judy Bell became the first woman president of the U.S. Golf Association two years ago, the same time that Alice Dye was elected the first female president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Now that Nancy Lopez is receiving the Old Tom Morris Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, what does she feel this says about the involvement of women in golf?

"I think women's involvement has grown tremendously over the last five or six years," Lopez said. "We've come a long way. A lot of people say, 'Why aren't you getting paid as much as the men?' or why, why why. You can only do what you can do."

"I think there are many more women playing it and enjoying it. I think even in the corporate world, they realize a lot of things get done on a golf course. It's a quiet place. It's away from phones. It's peaceful. Yet, you do realize who you want to do business with, because you learn more about their character on a golf course than anywhere. And I think women, especially corporate top executives, are finally catching on to that."

Lopez said that women are also getting involved "so they won't be golf widows. They enjoy being with their husbands more, and want to play golf with them and hopefully be the kind of golfer their husbands enjoy playing with."

"It's fun for me," she added. "I like to go to pro-ams and see groups of women playing, and the men really accepting that. Many years ago, when I was coming up I was not allowed to play on some golf courses because I was a woman."

As for Alice Dye and Judy Bell, "they are quality women in golf," Lopez said. "They respect the game. They respect the male game and yet they respect the women's game, also. When you have women who can do that, they have a lot of sense about golf. It's not an attitude [declaring] 'Women should be doing this or that.' It's more a statement: 'We can all do it together — for both men and women.'"

"I've always respected Judy Bell very much, and I used to play with Alice Dye when I was an amateur. I'm flabbergasted that I can even put my name beside theirs. It's an honor. When I started playing golf I just wanted to be the best I could be."

finally finished and I get a chance to play it and be a part of it, that will be neat.

GCN: Now that you have created Nancy Lopez Course Design, where do you want to work?

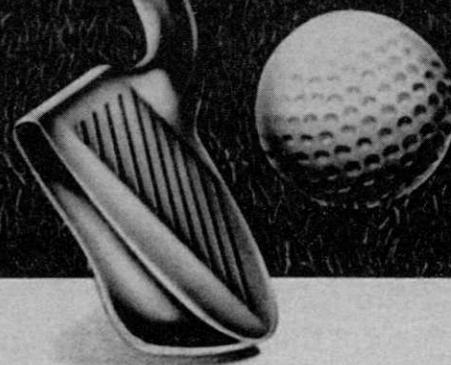
Lopez: Right now I'm looking at the United States. I'm hoping we develop one in New Mexico because that's where I grew up. They're in the talking stages now. That would be a lot of fun for me. I love New Mexico and to have my name on a golf course there would be really neat to me.

GCN: Have you had any involvement with the LPGA's new golf courses?

Lopez: I was a little disappointed they didn't get us involved — perhaps let each player design a hole there, since it was our golf course. I think it would have brought a little more — something — to it. It would have been fun to have 18 holes with 18 different players' names on them — to see the character of each player on each hole.

It is flattering for me that IMG would ask me. Playing all the golf I have, I feel I have insight on what a hole should look like. I don't want to put my name on something and not be involved in it. ▶

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