As leaves begin to drop and winter approaches, UGA turfgrass scientists have developed a new drought-resistant strain of tall fescue.

A diamond in the rough

UGA turfgrass scientists have developed a new drought-resistant strain of tall fescue.

Survey finds course values softening

By JAY FINEGAN

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Golf course values are stable or declining. The northern states are the new land of opportunity for companies looking to buy golf properties. And private clubs have pulled even with daily-fee facilities as desirable targets in the course acquisition market.

Those are among the findings of a survey by Golf Property Analysts (GPA) here, which polled course management companies, investors and financial institutions involved in funding golf course real-estate transactions.

According to Laurence A. "Larry" Hirsh, whose Hirsh Valuation Group owns GPA, the survey signals that the course acquisition market continues to be a good opportunity for companies looking to buy golf properties and private clubs have pulled even with daily-fee facilities as desirable targets in the course acquisition market.

Despite vandalism and fire, superintendent Szklinski prepares Southern Hills CC for next U.S. Open

By JOHN TORSIELLO

TULSA, Okla. — Golf fans attending next year’s U.S. Open at Southern Hills Country Club here will likely marvel at the impeccable and challenging beauty of the Perry Maxwell-designed layout. But few will know of the effort and sacrifice made by golf course superintendent John Szklinski, his staff and the membership at Southern Hills, which made the staging of the prestigious event at the Midwestern venue possible.

The Open is back at Southern Hills after a 42-year hiatus. In 1958, playing in sweltering heat, club-throwing Tommy Bolt won his only Open title here, besting a young South African named Gary Player by four strokes. Bolt’s skillful use of his driver on Southern Hills’ tree-lined fairways, fringed by gnarly and deep brush — there’s no possibility of slicing a drive into an adjacent fairway. The par-72, 18-hole design features dramatic elevation changes and stunning mountain views all around.

"The Creek Course is hardly your basic golf course," Nelson said. "Every time you come around a corner, there’s a different look and feel to the course and its aesthetics. And there are many strategic options as to how to play each hole.”

The course is situated on the sprawling Army base at Fort Richardson, next to the old Hill Course at Moose Run, built in 1951. The entire 36-hole complex, owned and operated by the military, is open for public play.

"The people in charge up here are real golf fanatics,” Nelson said, referring to the base’s top brass and senior civilian officials. "Four years ago they started soliciting bids for a second course. They had 700 acres and we were supposed to..."
Penn Pals at Valhalla

Mark Wilson CGCS
Superintendent, Valhalla Golf Club
Louisville, KY
Host of the 2000 PGA Championship

Par 3, Number 11
Jack Nicklaus Design

We rebuilt or enlarged 9 tees for the 2000 PGA Championship and seeded them all with Penncross

“In preparation for the 2000 PGA Championship, we rebuilt, resurfaced, or enlarged 9 tees. The one I’m most proud of is the rebuilt 7,000 square foot tee for the 4,200 square foot, par 3, Number 11 green. We seeded these tees with Penncross not only for its rapid recovery, but for its ability to survive this summer’s increased play and still look and play great for the Championship.

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Mark Wilson CGCS, Superintendent

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EPA proposes new wetland protection regs

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration has proposed significant new protection for tens of thousands of acres of wetlands across the United States. Under the action, which was taken August 10, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers are proposing to address a regulatory loophole in the Clean Water Act by clarifying the types of activities that can harm wetlands, and thus require regulation.

"Due to a legal loophole that has been exploited," said EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner, "an additional 20,000 acres of wetlands have been lost in this country over the last two years. The proposal will allow us to go as far as we can through administrative reforms to close this loophole and protect wetlands."

EPA and the Corps are proposing to regulate certain activities that often destroy or fill in wetlands. The proposal will clarify the current regulations under the Clean Water Act, Section 404, to address environmentally destructive earth-moving activities (such as mechanized land clearing, ditching, channelization, and in-stream mining) associated with draining wetlands.

To protect wetlands, EPA and the Corps first clarified in August 1993 that Clean Water Act permits were required for any discharges associated with draining wetlands. Referred to as the "Tulloch" rule, that definition was challenged by a number of trade associations and overturned in January 1997 by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Affirmed in June 1998 by the U.S. Court of Appeals, the Court's decision resulted in a loophole in the wetlands regulatory program, leaving certain forms of environmentally destructive activities essentially unchecked according to the EPA.

Since the 1997 District Court decision, EPA and the Corps estimate that nearly 20,000 acres of wetlands have been destroyed and more than 150 miles of streams channeled without environmental review or mitigation.

In addition to realizing no net loss of wetlands through the Clean Water Act regulatory program, the Clinton administration's Clean Water Action Plan has already committed to an annual net gain of 100,000 acres of wetlands beginning in 2005, through wetlands restoration programs.

The proposal to change the definition of dredged materials will be published in the Federal Register and will be open for public comment for 60 days.

Rainmaker breaks ground at Newport National GC

COLUMBIA, Md. — The Rainmaker Group has signed an agreement to build the first 18 holes of the Newport National Golf Club, a planned 36-hole golf complex designed by Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest & Associates.

The project is located on Adirondack Island just north of the historic community of Newport, R.I. The first 18 holes will be a private, members-only facility. Construction is scheduled to start this fall. Rainmaker hopes to have the first nine holes ready for play in the fall of 2001, with the complete course open in the spring of 2002.

The second 18-hole layout will be a high-quality daily-fee facility designed to service the demands of the burgeoning tourist market. Preliminary design and permitting is already underway, and construction should begin next fall.

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**Turf Quality**—Measured at Turf Research Facilities in Three States.

![Turf Quality Chart]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>HERITAGE</th>
<th>Untreated Control</th>
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<tr>
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<td>9.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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* Turf quality ratings are on a 0–10 scale where 10 is excellent. Values less than 6 represent plots with unacceptable turf.
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Supply outpacing demand as new courses multiply

It was bound to happen sooner or later. Given the explosive growth of new U.S. golf courses—an average of 303 a year from 1991 through 1999—it was inevitable that "supply" would eventually outstrip "demand." And now it has, according to a study of industry trends by the National Golf Foundation (NGF).

Here are the hard numbers. In 1986, there were about 1,900 golfers for every course. The ratio shot up in 1990, with 2,250 players for every "18-hole equivalent." This was a period—86 to 90—when the golfing population was rising, but financing difficulties placed a lot of development projects on hold. Consequently, demand began to outpace supply.

When the real estate market recovered, however, course builders made up for lost time, rapidly shifting projects from "in planning" to "under construction." By 1998, the number of courses being built hit an all-time high of 1,069. Today, there are 1,970 golfers per course, back down near the 1986 levels.

That works out to a growth rate of one to two percent a year. This is great news for golfers—less crowded courses—but not so great for course owners and managers.

The situation isn't likely to change anytime soon. In the NGF's new report, "Trends in the Golf Industry," it projects that the game will experience a "natural" addition of three to four million new golfers and about 100 million more rounds over the next decade.

**LATENT DEMAND OPPORTUNITY**

That works out to a growth rate of one to two percent a year. At the same time, however, the number of golf courses will likely grow at two to three percent a year, outstripping the new demand. "If this supply/demand imbalance continues," the report concludes, "then the operating performance of the average golf facility can be expected to erode."

And the imbalance will continue—and then some. That annual average of 303 courses opening over the past decade takes into account the early '90s, when openings were in the 350 range. Momentum has accelerated sharply since then. Last year, 508 courses opened for business, and at year-end 946 courses were under construction and 908 more were in the planning stage. Obviously, that translates into even fewer golfers per course, and it's undoubtedly one reason that course valuations are now beginning to erode.

*Continued on next page*

**MAILBAG**

**MACH 2 WORKS IN ROUGH**

To the editor:

I'd like to correct some misinformation that appears in the July 2000 issue of *Golf Course News* in the country. In the article entitled, "Destructive beetle spreading fast through Northeast," you reference comments by a golf course superintendent in Dover, N.H. The article says the superintendent does not use MACH 2 turf insecticide, manufactured by RohMid, on his golf course's rough because the product "is not recommended for unirrigated areas."

In fact, MACH 2 is an excellent grub control product to use in such areas. Nearly all grub insects, whether preventives or curatives, need to be eventually watered in to be effective. The same holds true for MACH 2. But because of the product's soil stability, immediate irrigation is not required. By contrast, the label directions for Merit and most curative products call for irrigation within 24 hours after application for optimum control. With MACH 2, we do recommend immediate irrigation when it is being used in curative applications up to the second stage.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide accurate information on MACH 2.

Sincerely,
Rich Kalik
RohMid Board

**HATS OFF TO OLD BROCKWAY**

To the editor:

I enjoyed the article in your August issue about the Old Brockway Course becoming certified by Audubon International.

The course is a great track nestled in the Tahoe basin. As the superintendent at Old Brockway for the seasons of 1993-85, I have first-hand knowledge of the tremendous efforts Lane Lewis and his sister Leslie

*Continued on page 8*

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New courses outpace demand

Continued from previous page

It’s not all gloom and doom for course owners, however. The macro-trends are favorable. Collectively, inflation-adjusted course revenues have doubled over the last 11 years from $7 billion to $14 billion. According to the NGF, one third of the increase ($2.4 billion) came from new players, and two thirds ($4.7 billion) have come from higher greens fees.

"Thus," the report says, "the growth in greens fees revenue has come mostly from real pricing increases on a per-round basis, and only to a much less extent from new players." But then comes the bad news: "The per capita spending increases experienced in the 1990s are likely not sustainable indefinitely."

The solution, of course, is to attract more new players to the game, and the good folks at NGF are ready with a plan. To ensure a more prosperous future, the report states, the industry needs to see 100 million more rounds over the next decade – beyond the "natural" growth. Where will they come from? From the 41 million "high potential" people who would like to golf or who would like to play more often.

Working with the international management consulting firm McKinsey & Company, the NGF has come up with a five-step action plan that can be implemented at the individual course level. To wit:

• **Targeted programs.** Create a wider variety of programs designed to ease the entry and development of high-potential targeted groups (e.g., programs for women, mixed singles, parent/child and married couples.)

• **Tailored products.** Develop products that appeal to a broader spectrum of golfers and that ease the transition from ranges to courses (e.g., better utilization and marketing of existing par-3, executive, and nine-hole courses, and more and better practice facilities.)

• **Dynamic pricing.** Provide special pricing in much the same way as an airline. The golf product can be priced in many ways (e.g., by time of day, day of week, group discounts and frequent player programs) to create value for both customer and owner.

• **Skills training.** Make learning the game more fun and inviting. Golfers want to learn in a friendly, non-intimidating environment. Golf instruction must become more than just swing mechanics. It should encompass strategy, course management, short game, and other important aspects that a golfer must learn to become a genuinely committed player.

• **Enriched understanding of golf.** Provide a stronger connection to the game’s traditions and values. An important part of the golf experience involves the history, traditions, etiquette and other nuances of the game about which committed players are so passionate.

"The golf industry is at a crossroads," the NGF report concludes. "We may continue to grow at a slow but steady rate, or we may take advantage of a very large and addressable opportunity to increase participation."

Coping with consolidation: a superintendent’s strategy for success

Anthony L. Williams, CGCS

In the beginning, golf was simple. There was only one golf course. Therefore golf management was simple. There was only one way to do things, so no comparisons could be made.

After the success of the first golf course, many new courses were built that were similar in function but had very different goals. Some courses focused only on financial results, for example, while others focused more on playability and scenic design. The competition for players and ratings grew at a snail’s pace. The growth of the golf industry created an opportunity for corporations to begin operating groups of courses with unifying standards and goals. This strategy uses the synergy of bulk buying and standardized procedures to increase efficiency.

Many golf management companies use these concepts successfully. However, the superintendent of a newly acquired property often faces unfamiliar challenges. The fear of replacement, budget reviews and lengthy policy manuals all create stress. The superintendent must overcome this stress by aligning his goals with those of the management company. Succeeding in this situation is difficult, but can be very rewarding.

There are two primary goals a superintendent should focus upon during a management change at his property. The first is to fully understand the objectives of the new management company, and the second is to adjust the operations to best meet these new objectives.

**TAKE PROACTIVE APPROACH**

As superintendent, you must become proactive and accept the process of change. Soon after acquiring a property, representatives from the management company will arrive to assess the course and its management. These operational meetings are critical to the superintendent’s future at the property. The objectives must obtain the company’s objectives for the property in these meetings and demonstrate the organization, work ethic and communication skills needed to achieve these objectives.
Coping with consolidation
Continued from page 7
will greatly influence a management company’s perception of you and your crew. Ask for all mission statements and policy manuals to be made available to your entire staff. Make any changes necessary to align your current procedures to the information provided. Although this is not an easy task, it is necessary to help calm any fears you or your staff may have about the new operating procedures.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES
We have all heard stories of superintendents being dismissed without having an opportunity to change, but in most cases a well-educated, hard working superintendent is a valuable asset. The accomplishments of a professional golf course superintendent are always the result of dedication and perseverance. If you know what is expected and deliver quality results, your services will always be in demand.

Golf management companies are a growing force in the industry, and superintendents must adapt to the unique challenges this trend will bring. A golf management company can offer the superintendent structure, promotions and increased recognition. I have been fortunate to work at the same property for 14 years under three different owners, six general managers and three directors of golf. As director of grounds for the Renaissance Pines Isle Resort, I have been exposed to tremendous professional opportunities within the Marriott Golf family. I have great compassion for those who have had negative experiences with golf management companies, and I hope the strategies I have suggested will help others find success in their own situations.

Anthony L. Williams is superintendent at Renaissance Pines Isle Resort. This article first appeared in “Through the Green,” published by the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association.

OLD BROCKWAY
Continued from page 6
have gone through to get their course certified. This is a feather in their cap. The Tahoe basin has a short season, and environmental restrictions that few other superintendent’s have to adhere to.

I take my hat off to the whole staff at Old Brockway for their efforts. It took a great amount of work by a lot of people and agencies to get them their certification requirements fulfilled. Again, to Lane and his staff, keep Tahoe blue, and the greens true.

Sincerely,
Gary M. Puckett
Golf operations manager
Brevard County, Fla.

We want to hear from you
Letters to the editor are an integral part of GCN, so let your voice be heard. Send all correspondence to:

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PO BOX 997
YARMOUTH, ME 04096
FAX #: 207-846-0657
JFINEGAN@GOLFCOURSENEWS.COM

Anderson in GCSAA’s chairman’s club
LAWRENCE, Kan. — Golf course developer and real estate investor Lyle Anderson has pledged to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Foundation. The pledge is earmarked for the foundation’s $5-million “Investing in the Beauty of Golf” endowment campaign and places Anderson in the “chairman’s club,” which recognizes contributions of $25,000 to $50,000.

“The success I’ve enjoyed in developing golf course properties has been supported in many ways by golf course superintendents,” Anderson said. “The association and its foundation are valued partners to the game and business of golf.”

The GCSAA Foundation enhances golf by funding applied research and advanced education in course management. Since its inception in 1955, the foundation has provided more than $1 million in research support, and has funded more than 1,000 scholarships.

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Scientists make breakthrough in drought-resistant tall fescue

By JAY FINEGAN

GRANT, Ga. — University of Georgia turfgrass scientists have developed a new drought-resistant strain of fescue that promises to be a boon to golf courses. The so-called Southeast Tall Fescue is the first release to emerge from the university's fescue breeding program, started in 1992. The seed is expected to be marketed by Landmark Seed Co. and available sometime next year.

Ronny Duncan, Ph.D., professor of breeding and stress physiology in the department of crop and soil sciences, headed up the painstaking development project. His search for grass samples that could be used in the experiment took him to South America, Africa, the Bahamas and all over Georgia.

Duncan's colleague in the fescue breakthrough, Bob Carrow, Ph.D., professor of turfgrass science, said the new variety will likely see duty on golf courses as rough and fairway framing and on clubhouse grounds. He said recommended mowing heights - two inches in southern climates, an inch and a half in more moderate regions - would bar fairway use.

When the breeding program began, the goal was to develop turf-type tall fescues with the attributes necessary to persist under Georgia conditions. The primary goal was to come up with a fescue that could withstand drought, acid soil complex, and high soil temperatures, while generating enough carbohydrates - plant food produced by photosynthesis - to maintain strong roots during hot summer months. Additionally, the scientists sought a fescue strain with good turf quality, in shoot density, color and growth rate, and which would exhibit pest-resistant qualities and strong seed production.

BOOT CAMP FOR PLANTS

It took eight years, but finally Duncan and Carrow produced a strain, through natural selection, that met the criteria. "Southeast Tall Fescue," Carrow said, "is very, very drought resistant.

The scientists subjected their various experimental strains to severe stress and water deprivation during a "plant boot camp" that killed between 95 and 99 percent of them. "That's the only way you can identify the ones that have super Continued on page 14

At Montreux, Heinricks thrives on annual Reno Tahoe Open

By DOUG SAUNDERS

RENO, Nev. — The long, hot, sunny days of Nevada summer never come quickly enough for Doug Heinricks, head superintendent here at Montreux Golf and Country Club.

The Iowa native is in his second year caring for the bentgrass fairways of this massive Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course on the eastern slope of Mount Rose, just south of Reno — "The Biggest Little City in the World." His challenge is nurturing lush, consistent fairways and greens, not only for the discerning members of this private facility, but also for the recently held Reno Tahoe Open, a PGA Tour event.

"I love it when the warm weather sets in, because I need to have my soil temperatures come up in order to stimulate microbial activity and root growth," he said. "The soil at the base of the mountains is decomposed granite, which makes it easily compacted and hard to penetrate. Irrigation water seems to run off rather than soak in. But it is a challenge that I am glad to take on just to be in this region."

Montreux opened in 1997 in the midst of a golf construction boom in these parts. More than 140 holes have been built in four years. Montreux has established itself as the premier private club on the eastern slope of the

Continued on page 12
STRANGELY ENOUGH, THE PART ON THE RIGHT IS MORE EXPENSIVE.

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ATLANTA — You’d think Ralph Kepple would be nervous. After all, he’s got 30 of the world’s best golfers coming here to East Lake Golf Club on October 30 for the PGA Tour Championship. But Kepple is taking it in stride. His club hosted the same event in 1998, and the superintendent knows exactly what to expect.

“Starting in mid-September, one company comes in to build scaffolding, and one starts building tent structures for corporate hospitality,” he said. “They will be building that stuff right up til the first day of the tournament. And the television companies will come in a couple of weeks prior to the event and start building their towers. It’s real hectic for a while, but I’m looking forward to it. Right now, we’re doing a lot of extra fertilizing in the roughs, leveling heads and just trying to get everything as smooth as we can.”

Kepple has been here for eight years, following a stint at Settindown Creek Golf Club in Roswell, Ga. The private East Lake course opened in 1906, and underwent a Donald Ross redesign in 1913. “We had a major renovation here in 1994, with Rees Jones, bringing it back to the Ross design, and that generated a lot of publicity,” Kepple said. “The PGA Tour Championship brings in the year’s top 30 money winners. It’s not considered a major,” Kepple said, “but it’s definitely major money, and the field is great.”

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Sierra. But with so many new courses in the region, a strong identity for the club was essential to develop the prestige that leads to strong sales of memberships and house lots.

When the PGA Tour began to look for a new event to fill the void of the August date that coincided with the NEC World Series of Golf, Reno entered the competition against such cities as St. Louis, Seattle and Portland, Ore.

To some, Reno was a surprise choice over cities that had hosted major championships in the past. Tour officials were satisfied that Reno, which hosted a PGA Event in the 1940s and a Senior Tour stop in the early '80s, could once again fill the need, as well as come up with the required $2-million franchise fee.

**BENTGRASS IN THE SNOW**

The success of Nicklaus's Castle Pines Country Club in Colorado, which also hosts an annual PGA Tour event, lead the designer to the choice of bentgrass for the Montreux course. The decision promoted a lot of consternation from local superintendents. This region sees plenty of weather cold enough to hinder the warm soil temperatures that bentgrass needs to thrive.

Doug Heinricks came to Montreux in January 1999 after working nine years in the Palm Springs area. The 32-year-old Iowa State grad has been working around golf courses since he was 15. "When the Montreux opportunity presented itself. I was excited to come to a mountain region just to be able to enjoy seasonal weather again," he said.

In Palm Springs the weather pattern is warm, hot and hot-tet. Around Reno, on the other hand, the thermometer can shoot into the high 90s during summer, but winter temperatures dip into the 30s. Snow is not unusual in February, but Heinricks still works to keep the course open year-round. He combats the cold and compaction by doing an early aeration and closely monitoring his watering.

"We have bentgrass fairways but bluegrass rough," he said. "I have to really control my irrigation patterns to get a consistent look to the course. In the end, though, it is the warm days, especially warm days early in the spring, that are my best friend."

**SPECTACULAR LAYOUT**

Montreux is a huge golf course, with over 45 acres of fairways. Located at 5,000 feet at the base of statuesque Mount Rose, the bold layout shares two distinct landscapes - rolling high-desert land, and thick pine forests. Nicklaus used the best of both terrains to create a stunning course that measures 7,552 yards from the tips and features dramatic elevation changes. The 17th hole alone features a 130-foot drop from the tee to the slender fairway below.

Heinricks and his summer-time staff of 35 endeavor to keep the course in tournament shape at all times. This plan pays off when he sets about preparing the course for the annual PGA Tour event, where the most critical things are consistent lies on the fairways, the condition of bunkers and green speeds.

Heinricks felt that his course provided a fair test last year during its inaugural Tour run. PGA green specs were easily met, as Heinricks usually mows his greens lower than the Tour requires.

"I mow during the summer at 120/1000 and raise up to 125/1000 [1 1/8 inch] for the event," he said. "We have the green speeds stimping at 10 in advance of the tournament, and with double mowing we get the speed up to 10.6. We work so hard to get the course ready for the PGA Tour that you hope all of your effort is appreciated."

Still, he would not trade the experience for anything. "Few superintendents get the chance to host a Tour event, with all the energy and excitement that surrounds it," Heinricks said. "Even fewer have the opportunity to work on a course that is willing to spend the money necessary to provide that type of conditioning every day for its membership. I'm fortunate to be here at Montreux and have that chance."

**MAINTENANCE**

**Tahoe Reno**

Continued from page 9

**MAINTENANCE**

**Tahoe Reno**

Continued from page 9

Sierra. But with so many new courses in the region, a strong identity for the club was essential to develop the prestige that leads to strong sales of memberships and house lots.

When the PGA Tour began to look for a new event to fill the void of the August date that coincided with the NEC World Series of Golf, Reno entered the competition against such cities as St. Louis, Seattle and Portland, Ore.

To some, Reno was a surprise choice over cites that had hosted major championships in the past. Tour officials were satisfied that Reno, which hosted a PGA Event in the 1940s and a Senior Tour stop in the early '80s, could once again fill the need, as well as come up with the required $2-million franchise fee.

**BENTGRASS IN THE SNOW**

The success of Nicklaus's Castle Pines Country Club in Colorado, which also hosts an annual PGA Tour event, lead the designer to the choice of bentgrass for the Montreux course. The decision promoted a lot of consternation from local superintendents. This region sees plenty of weather cold enough to hinder the warm soil temperatures that bentgrass needs to thrive.

Doug Heinricks came to Montreux in January 1999 after working nine years in the Palm Springs area. The 32-year-old Iowa State grad has been working around golf courses since he was 15. "When the Montreux opportunity presented itself. I was excited to come to a mountain region just to be able to enjoy seasonal weather again," he said.

In Palm Springs the weather pattern is warm, hot and hot-tet. Around Reno, on the other hand, the thermometer can shoot into the high 90s during summer, but winter temperatures dip into the 30s. Snow is not unusual in February, but Heinricks still works to keep the course open year-round. He combats the cold and compaction by doing an early aeration and closely monitoring his watering.

"We have bentgrass fairways but bluegrass rough," he said. "I have to really control my irrigation patterns to get a consistent look to the course. In the end, though, it is the warm days, especially warm days early in the spring, that are my best friend."

**SPECTACULAR LAYOUT**

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- **Operator comfort** is ensured by power steering, tilt steering and adjustable seat.
Salmon return to Oregon stream that meanders through 27 holes

WELCHES, Ore. — Thanks to The Resort at The Mountain's "Wee Burn" stream restoration project, fish are now being seen in parts of the stream and ponds that have been inaccessible since 1928, and two crops of wild coho salmon and steelhead trout smolts that spawned in the new habitat have migrated to the open sea. The Wee Burn wanders through the resort's 27 holes of golf, set at the western base of Mt. Hood.

The Wee Burn (Scottish for small stream), which runs through The Resort's Three Nines golf course, is a minor tributary of the Salmon River, a federally designated "wild and scenic river," and is part of the Sandy River Watershed. Since 1995, The Resort has been working closely with the U.S. Forest Service, Mt. Hood National Forest, Trout Unlimited, and others to restore wild fish habitat in the stream. In addition to volunteer work and grants from the Oregon Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, The Resort has invested over $200,000 in the project.

"We knew the Wee Burn had the potential to provide excellent fish habitat, and we're encouraged to see the juvenile fish using the prime habitat in the ponds and upper stream.

Continued on page 14

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Until now. To learn more, see your Toro distributor. Or visit www.toro.com.

Workers restoring Wee Burn
Audubon certifies Leatherstocking

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. - Audubon International has officially designated the Leatherstocking Golf Course at the Otesaga Resort here a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary under its Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS), a program endorsed by the U.S. Golf Association.

Designed by Devereux Emmet in 1909, the classic 18-hole championship Leatherstocking Golf Course, which sweeps along the western shore of Lake Otesaga, is considered one of the most scenic courses in the nation. It holds a four-diamond rating from Golf Digest for its challenging layout and well-protected greens.

Recently renovated at a cost of more than $1 million, the Leatherstocking Golf Course joined the ACSS program in 1996. Its participation is consistent with the overall commitment of the surrounding Cooperstown community to protecting its natural legacy.

Leatherstocking is one of only 11 courses in New York State to receive the Audubon International honor, along with other such courses as the Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck and the Westchester Country Club in Rye.

"Gaining certification is not a simple process. Course superintendent Bernard Banas and his staff were completely dedicated to this program for four years, and they deserve a lot of credit," said Eric Straus, president of the Leatherstocking Corp., which owns the course.

"In addition to being one of the prettiest courses you'll ever play, Leatherstocking is home to a variety of indigenous wildlife, including foxes, deer and the Eastern bluebird," said Dan Spooner, director of golf. "We are proud that we can maintain a safe sanctuary for the animals while providing an enjoyable and challenging golf experience."

Fescue breakthrough

Continued from page 9

tolerance," said Carrow.

For test samples, Duncannon collected any tall fescue plants he could find growing within six inches of a paved highway. "That would bring a high heat load to the grass," Carrow said.

"Any tall fescue that survived in conditions like that had to produce enough carbohydrates to do so. With that germ plasm base, plus the strains that survived intensive screening, it had enough to begin crossing.

The cross-strains went through another boot camp, which kept at least 95 percent of them. Then Duncan took the top one to five percent and started crossing those, subjecting them to even more rigorous conditions.

"To get that cross to start growing," Carrow said, "once he got those initial crosses, he scalped them with a mower to remove all the green tissue, which put a further strain on the carbohydrates. Under these extreme conditions, the heavier plants will turn on their generative capability to withstand conditions.

The scientists also made the grass more frugal. Grass usually drinks all the water it can at one time, growing in spurts that can't be maintained. With Southeast Tall Fescue, "even though the water is there in the soil, the grass doesn't use any more than it needs," Carrow said.

Southern Hills

Continued from page 1

of Southern Hills overcame unforeseen obstacles that might have led less committed individuals to tell the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) to look elsewhere for a site to stage its premier annual event.

VANDALS SPARKED RESTORATION

Already faced with considerable work in order to bring Southern Hills up to the USGA Open specifications, the workers at the course were dealt a blow when vandals seriously damaged nine greens in June of 1999. The vandalism was such that the putting surfaces had to be closed and regrassed.

"The club's board of governors saw what happened as an opportunity to undertake extensive restoration work," said Szklinski, who came to Southern Hills in 1995 from Desert Highlands, in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"My initial reaction to the vandalism was one of anger and disappointment," he said. "I knew after a week of watching how the greens would react that we would have to go through the process of regrassing. But I said to myself that we were going to look at this as an opportunity."

In addition to regrassing all the course's greens, work was done to upgrade the club's irrigation system, bunkers were rebuilt, the tall oak and pecan trees that form canopies over the sides of many fairways were trimmed, and longer championship tees built. It was decided that to insure the consistency of the course's putting surfaces the nine greens not affected by the vandalism would also be regrassed.

"The club was established in 1936," said Szklinski, "and we get some pretty heavy thunderstorms during the summer. Erosion over the years can change the face of bunkers and there can be encroachment toward the greens. It's

Salmon

Continued from page 13

for the first time in 70 years," said Ed Hopper, owner of the resort.

The Wee Burn has always had some coho and steelhead in it, but the best spawning portions, including ponds, were inaccessible to fish. A significant amount of work has been done, including adding wetland and alcoves to slow the stream down, restoring some of the stream's natural headwater, adding plants and trees, adding in-stream structures for spawning and resting areas, and building ladders to allow fish access to the upper ponds on the stream. While most of the work is complete, much is still underway by the resort and its partners to improve, maintain and monitor the changes.

"The Wee Burn's habitat has been improved fourfold, and we expect to see an increase in fish populations in the coming years," said Forester Chris Rossel. "To bring back fish stocks to a level of being delisted from the federal endangered and threatened species list, fish habitat on private lands has to improve. This project is a great example of private and public entities working together to ensure successful stream restoration on private lands."
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MAINTENANCE

Great Southwest GC closes for regrassing

ARLINGTON, Tex. - Great Southwest Golf Club, in Grand Prairie, in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, will be closed for a several months to install new grasses expected to better withstand Texas weather, the Arlington Morning News reported. Plans call for installation of Tifway 419 Bermudagrass on the fairways, officials said. The rye grass had been dying out. Members are upset and, at the same time, understanding. "I sympathize with the members. But this is a big commitment by the company to spend $1 million and make this one of the best courses in Texas," said club pro and general manager Chip Graham.

Club members were notified about the closure in a letter earlier this summer. It described how the management team was going to handle the conversion of the current bentgrass greens to a hybrid Bermudagrass.

The change was deemed necessary because the humidity and rains had caused Pythium to attack the greens.

Great Southwest members will be able to play other courses in the ownership group, including Diamond Oaks, Woodhaven, Oakridge, Eldorado, Los Rios and Thorntree.

"Bentgrass is a superb putting surface," club member Lou Duran said. "But they’ve had a lot of trouble with it [keeping it growing in the Texas heat]. The Champions or Tif Eagle is a positive way to go. Great Southwest could be a Colonial-type course. It’s that kind of layout. I’m looking at this as a positive."

Longtime member Mo Lambert said the club should have made the move a year earlier. "For me, I don’t know if it’s just getting older or what, but the summers keep getting hotter and dryer every year," he said.

Southern Hills

Continued from previous page

played at Southern Hills and they stepped up to the plate. What we want is not only for a course to be in top shape for the Open, but also that any work done will benefit the members 15 to 20 years down the road."

The USGA’s course preparation memo covers a wide range of issues, from turfgrass conditions and the length of the rough to the placements of grandstands and wiring. There is little flexibility in the USGA’s edicts, save for the speed of the greens.

"The course preparation memo is firm," said Moraghan. "We say this is how we want the course set up for the national championship. The only issue that is flexible is green speed. It’s very difficult to set a prescribed number because you don’t know until the week of the event what the weather conditions will be. I’ll ask John what he thinks he can give us, and we’ll settle on a number."

PRE-TOURNAMENT PREP

Moraghan said the USGA was impressed with the facelift at Southern Hills.

"The golf course superintendent is the most underrated player in the whole picture," he said. "John was new to Southern Hills and had to get the course ready on short notice. Throw in the vandalism to the greens and losing his maintenance building and he had to do a remarkable job. It’s going to be a great Open."

The summer weather in the Tulsa area is usually hot and dry, which demands that Southern Hills be extensively watered. The new irrigation system will be instrumental in keeping the course in top condition throughout the summer.

Prior to the Open and throughout the tournament, Szklinski will add part-time staff and will welcome volunteers to help with course maintenance.

"Once we get close to the Open there will be a very high sense of urgency and intensity," he said. "I’m sure I’ll have some butterflies. But I feel what we’ve been through has been a pretty good preparation for what we need to be like during the tournament."

When someone suggests you spend more money on a less effective preemergent, it’s time to hold on to your wallet.
Supers battle debris, weather and labor shortages to prep for winter

By MEGHAN FOLEY

For superintendents from Maine to the Northwest, fall cleanup to prepare for winter is always an important process. After all, what is done in the fall triggers the way a course greens up in the spring. Autumnal applications of snow-mold fungicides, fertilizers and topdressing, and overall course aerification, must occur in a short span of time before the weather changes.

For Jim Hodge, at Val Halla Golf Course in Cumberland, Maine, cleaning up in the autumn requires a great deal of attention. The scattered leaves, branches and pine needles of a typical New England fall keep him busy down to the very last week in November.

"We use everything from a small sweeper and a backpack blower to a walk-behind push blower and a big riding blower to clear the pine needles and leaves off the course," said Hodge. "For the entire month of September, we mow the fairways and the greens nonstop."

Michael Foster, superintendent at Province Lake in South Effingham, N.H., would agree. "In the fall, we have so much hand-raking and picking that needs to be done," he said. "We have to clear pine needles and leaves on a daily basis because we have a lot of both evergreen and maple oak trees on the course. Here, we rely heavily on manpower."

Foster focuses largely on aerification of the whole course throughout the New Hampshire autumn, altering his usual maintenance routine. "In the fall, we begin to change our fertilizer schedule so that we can do a thorough job of aerification," he said. "We try to go 2:1 of potassium to nitrogen. We also apply a light topdressing."

In Post Falls, Idaho, where Lonnie Aller is superintendent of Highlands Golf and Country Club, preparations for a mild fall begin in the third week of September. Blowing leaves and needles off the course occupies much of Aller’s time, but for him, the most important thing is mowing the grasses until they are dormant to make sure that they are not shaggy going into the winter.

"We have a small blower that we use to consolidate the pine needles around the tees and greens, which is a good deal of the cleaning that we do," Aller said. "Then we use a vacuum to sweep the fairways and the roughs. We continue mowing right until the very end of November so the grass isn’t the least bit shaggy for the winter. Aerification of fairways and greens is also important in the fall."

THE SNOW-MOLD BELT

In the Rockies, superintendents have different methods for making sure that their courses are properly cleared in the fall. For Jim Myers at Vail Golf Club, in Vail, Colo., keeping the course clear doesn’t involve quite so much. "We don’t have a whole lot on the course except for aspen trees, so we do a relatively small amount of leaf blowing – not like those guys in New England," he explained.

Myers is mostly concerned with the coming snow. "I always pay close attention to aerification and snow-mold control," he said. "Once the grass goes dormant, everything has to be mowed at the proper height so that a better root system can exist in the winter. With a stronger root system, plants have the chance to store more carbohydrates, which in turn allows them to survive a brutal winter."

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

Goossen’s Versa Vac utilizes a specially designed, spring tension Turf Retainer located between each row of core extractors. The Turf Retainers glide along the surface of the turf while the cores are being extracted, maintaining a smooth, playable surface. The aerator head consists of 120 spoons which form a 5-inch grid with each 58-inch-wide swath, providing ample aeration for most soil types.

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continued on page 18
The John Deere TC125 turf collection system is a tow-behind attachment that allows one person to pick up and dump turf debris, such as aeration cores, sand, clippings, leaves or thatch. The TC125 covers a swath 48 inches wide and has a hopper capacity of 25 cubic feet. With a brush speed of 500-600 rpm, an average-size green can be cleared in about 15 minutes. The TC125 is designed to be towed behind either a heavy-duty utility vehicle equipped with hydraulics or a compact utility tractor with a selective control valve. An offset towing feature, adjustable from the operator's seat, allows the unit to be towed either directly behind or offset to the left side of the vehicle. Brush aggressiveness and flotation are controlled by a 6-inch diameter, full-width roller located directly behind the rotary brush. The roller height can be adjusted for turf conditions and brush wear. A hydraulic-powered lift cylinder makes for easy dumping. For more information, contact: John Deere Inquiry Department, P.O. Box 12217, Research Triangle Park, N.C. 27709.

The Tornado 8 F8 Tornado blower from MTD Pro is powered by an 8-hp Briggs and Stratton Industrial Plus engine which generates 175 mph air speed and 2500 CFM air volume. The Tornado also offers the following features: impeller blades cast from heat-treated, aviation-grade magnesium, a built-in deflector, and 11-inch by four-inch pneumatic tires for easy rolling. The blower meets OSHA Noise-Level Requirements. For more information, contact 330-225-9133, or www.mtdpro.com.

Excel Industries introduces the Hustler Hog, a mower ideally suited for places that are mown only once or twice a year. The Hog features a 48-inch single-blade deck that can cut anything it can bend over. The zero-discharge deck is constructed for extra heavy-duty operation and has reinforced side walls. The 5/16-inch-thick blade has swinging blade tips for added safety and a hazard-jumper center section. The Hog also features H-Bar Steering. This easy-to-operate concept resembles motorcycle steering, with a forward twist to move forward and a backward twist for reverse. For more information, contact 1-800-395-4757.

The Cushman 705 Sweeper tackles turf clean up

The new Cushman 705 tow-behind sweeper is designed for quick cleanup of aeration cores, leaves, sand, needles, branches and grass clippings on turf or hard surfaces. The unit uses hydraulically powered brushes to quietly pick up almost anything on turf, sidewalks, cart paths and parking lots. Since the Cushman 705 Sweeper doesn't have an engine to produce noise, it can be used throughout the day with minimal disturbance to golfers, bystanders and residential areas. All sweeper functions, including brush engagement, brush height adjustment, flap adjustment and unloading, can be controlled from the operator's seat. A dual-pivot, pick-up head and weight transfer system are utilized to maintain proper sweeping pressures and follow ground contours for any situation. The hopper is constructed of galvanized steel and six load wheels reduce ground compaction and increase load stability. The unit features a sweeping width of 69 inches and a capacity of 5.1 cubic yards. For more information contact 888-922-TURF.

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Leaves, labor

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According to Myers, timing is key. In Vail the snow flies at the end of October. “We do the fall application of fungicides to the greens right after Labor Day, and then we do our full application to the entire course at the beginning of October.”

At the Buffalo Hills Golf Course in Kalispell, Mont., near Glacier National Park, superintendent Patrick Meeker is also more concerned with the snow than the leaves. “Since we are up north here, we have to winterize the pump stations and fountains early,” said Meeker. “We do all of our chemical applications for snow molds.”

LABOR SHORTAGE CHALLENGES

From regulating snow mold to blowing out irrigation systems, there is always plenty to be done when the leaves are changing. With school starting up at the same time, however, all those high school and college kids who helped out during the summer are gone. Indeed, for many superintendents, the biggest obstacle in the fall lies in the decline of manual labor. The maintenance crew at Val Hala GC in Maine, for example, usually falls from 12 to six in the fall, doubling the load for those who remain.

“Our lack of labor when the fall comes around plays a big factor in the daily maintenance of the golf course,” said Hodge. “So we have to try to get as much done as we can early on. I do all of the maintenance projects at the end of the summer while I have all my help, and up until Sept. 21 we mow the grasses like crazy. Once the grasses stop growing, we start doing any projects on drainage, tee construction, bunker construction, and so forth.”

Depending on location, season and individual layout, every superintendent adheres to different tips and techniques that ensure the visual and physical success of their golf course. Hodge faithfully abides by one such tip that he claims has been passed along from other superintendents and works wonders for his course.

“No matter what, I have to get all the debris cleaned up in the fall so that I’ll have a better course in the spring,” he explained.
Washington National opens University Course

AUBURN, Wash. — Washington National Golf Club (WNGC) has unveiled the first of a two-phase development with the opening of the University Course, which will serve as home to the University of Washington’s men’s and women’s golf teams.

The public, 18-hole, par-72 layout, designed by golf architect John Fought, is owned and managed by Kirkland-based OB Sports.

The head coach of the Washington Huskies golf team, O.D. Vincent, is the son of Orrin Vincent, owner of OB Sports and a native of the Pacific Northwest. “It’s been a dream of mine to build a course worthy of hosting a major championship, and Washington National is that course,” said Orrin Vincent. “It is all the more meaningful having been afforded the opportunity to do it in my hometown.”

The University Course features five sets of strategically placed ryegrass tees, allowing golfers of all skill levels to play the course, which ranges from 7,004 yards from the back pegs down to 5,117 yards from the shortest markers. A large clubhouse deck overlooks the 18th hole and offers expansive views.

The most dramatic holes, perhaps, are the par-5 14th and the par-4 15th. Vincent modeled the 14th – a 463-yarder – after Pine Valley’s sixth, a hole so tough it’s often called “Hell’s Half Acre.” Vincent’s version skirts several bunkers and requires a downhill third shot that can send balls bouncing sharply off the back of the green.

The 15th hole, 342 yards long, plays to an island green against a backdrop of boulders, flowers and a waterfall. Precision is required to reach the green safely. “This,” said Vincent, “is an Augusta hole.”

Various details at the course expand on the college theme. The golf carts, for example, are gold with purple trim, the Huskies’ team colors. Each cart is custom named for a Husky athlete, and inside the cart is a description of that “Husky Legend.” For instance, the Warren Moon cart features a rundown of his collegiate and pro football careers. There’s also one custom colored cart for each of the other Pac-10 Conference schools, complete with...

Ernie Els Enterprises joins forces with Nicklaus Design

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Nicklaus Design has entered into a joint venture with Ernie Els Enterprises to pursue golf course design opportunities. The parties intend to develop, implement and market a golf course design business supported by the infrastructure of Nicklaus Design, and featuring the design work, strategies and endorsement of Ernie Els.

Nicklaus Design, a division of Golden Bear International, Inc., the privately held company of golfer Jack Nicklaus and the Nicklaus family, will provide Ernie Els Design, Ltd. with the staff and technical support required to complete the conceptual and planning documents necessary to design a golf course. Support will include all computer-aided design work related to routing, strategies...

Oneida Nation’s Shenendoah Golf Club ready for play

ONEIDA, N.Y. — The Oneida Indian Nation recently opened its 18-hole championship Shenendoah Golf Club adjacent to the Turning Stone Casino Resort in central New York. Playing to a par of 72 and ranging up to 7,129 yards from the back tees, the course provides a challenge for everyone from the high handicap to the most accomplished shooters.

Designed, constructed and maintained to tournament standards, golfers at Shenendoah will experience conditions normally reserved for tour professionals. “The Shenendoah Golf Club is a great tour-caliber course that is as fine a course as you will find anywhere in the United States,” says Bob O’Brien, director of golf at Turning Stone Casino Resort.

The Oneida group chose course designer Rick Smith for his attention to detail and commitment to maintaining the integrity of the existing landscape. Recognized by Audubon International for his efforts in designing courses that preserve and enhance the environment, Smith has blended this 18-hole layout into its natural surroundings.

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Witter Design adds Lembke, expands roster of projects

By JAY FINEGAN

LOCKPORT, N.Y. — The golf course architectural firm Witter Design has expanded its team with the addition of Brian Lembke as senior designer. Trained as a landscape architect at State University of New York School of Environmental Science and Forestry, Lembke spent the last three years with national golf course contractor Turf Drain Inc., where he learned the skills of course construction and shaping. His impact has been immediate with Witter Design, which has several projects underway this season.

According to golf architect and company founder Scott Witter, the addition of Lembke should give clients additional confidence that the same individuals who developed the design ideas will also transform them into the envisioned landscape.

Witter noted that, in many cases, superintendents and their crews are capable of handling the finishing aspects of a green, bunker, or tee renovation project. “For many clubs we work with, it makes a lot of sense for this to occur and we encourage it,” he said.

Under these circumstances, Witter added, it’s not easy to find an independent contractor who’s capable of shaping a particular feature and who is interested in handing the remaining work over to the club. With the shaping and project coordination skills of Lembke, he said, Witter Design has opened up new opportunities to assure clients that their design intent will turn out as planned.

A case in point is the 89-year-old Potsdam Town and County Club, in upstate New York. Witter Design is completing the finishing touches on nine new holes to bring the course up to 18 holes. It is a dramatic Adirondack mountain layout that crosses a trout stream seven times.

A local contractor, Ron’s Agri-drainage Inc., accepted the challenge of the project without the experience of having built a course before. It was not long after the dirt was moved that Ron’s Agri-drainage encountered trouble. “Ron had no idea how to do the green-shaping, and he had no shaper — the shaper he was counting on fell through,” Witter said. “He called and asked if we could spare Brian for a few weeks. It worked out very well. Brian had been one of Turf Drain’s top shapers for three and a half years. It took care of Ron’s crisis, because Brian was on top of the Cat 550 doing all the shaping. And I was going to get exactly what I wanted, because Brian was going to be my eyes on site. He gives us a new dimension.”

“That’s a big difference from the way most architect’s work,” Witter added. “Normally, we supervise construction and make changes, and say ‘let’s raise that mound up a little bit. It’s going to be my eyes on the site. I can’t go away and return in two weeks for your next visit, and that’s been done.”

The grassing of the Potsdam course will be complete by early September, and the full 18-hole track is expected to open in fall 2001.

Also in progress for Witter Design is a new 18-hole daily-fee facility, Ironwood Golf Course, southeast of Buffalo. Set on scenic high ground in Wyoming County, the routing of the new course had to negotiate its way around a large television transmission tower. Ponds are now being excavated and earthmoving has begun for the rough shaping of green and tee sites. Irrigation and the primary feature construction will commence in the spring of 2001.

Other ongoing projects for the firm include multiple tee and bunker renovations at Midvale Golf and Country Club and Penfield Country Club, both in Rochester, N.Y. Witter Design is also working with architect Jerry Matthews to co-design the 18-hole Redjacket Golf Club.

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Play begins at Dye’s Irish Course

By MEGHAN FOLEY

KOHLER, Wis. — A fourth Pete designed golf course has joined the acclaimed combination of championship layouts at The American Club resort here. This one, named the Irish Course, lies adjacent to the Straits Course at Whistling Straits. Public play began August 1.

The Irish Course weaves around the western perimeter of the Whistling Straits property, and features bentgrass tees, fairways and greens as well as large bunkers and sand dunes. Four creeks wind through the course and come into play on nine holes. Five tee placements are marked on each hole, although more can be accommodated. The arrangement allows players of varying abilities to enjoy a round together without diminishing the beauty of the course.
Hills' Sienna Plantation opens

MISSOURI CITY, Texas — The Sienna Plantation Golf Club, designed by Arthur Hills, has opened for play. The club is part of Sienna Plantation, a 10,500-acre community near Houston. The course winds through a forest and several lakes add challenges, offering risk/reward shot values.

"Spacious corridors afforded us the opportunity to build a variety of golf holes," said Hills. "Our goal was to design an easy-to-maintain course that fit naturally onto the site, enhanced the beauty of the property and provided variety in the shots required. We wanted to be sensitive to the environment while keeping in mind the elements that give a course character."

Sienna's planners spent nearly a year identifying and delineating sensitive environmental areas and designed the course to have zero or minimal impact on the wetlands environment, said Doug Goff, general manager. Sienna worked with wetlands consultants to create areas of interest around the golf course, preserving the wetlands. On the course, the wetlands will be treated as hazards.

Irish Course

Continued from previous page

Steve Friendlander, general manager and director of golf for the Kohler resort, describes the Irish Course as an interesting hybrid. "It has parkland-style holes with trees and creek crossings, grassland holes that are somewhat flat and meandering, and the dunes and bunkers of a seaside links course, without the ocean."

In addition to the creeks that intersect the course, the layout also permits views of Lake Michigan from five holes. The lake is quite visible from hole 13, but that won't be the principal reason the 185-yard, par-3 will be memorable, according to Friendlander. Dubbed "blind man's bluff," hole 13 reveals only about 10 to 25 percent of its putting surface from most of the tee boxes. "It may be the most memorable hole you'll ever play in the United States," Friendlander predicted. "The green is absolutely huge, more than 20,000 square feet. But it's built down in the middle of a war zone with pot bunkers and dunes 20 to 40 feet high on three sides."

Whistling Straits is located nine miles northeast of the resort destination of Kohler, Wis. The resort's other amenities include The American Club, the Midwest's only AAA Five Diamond resort hotel; Blackwolf Run golf course, site of the 1998 U.S. Women's Open Championship; and Kohler Waters Spa, set to debut in this fall. The Straits Course will host the 2004 PGA Championship.
SAJO Construction steps into world of course ownership

By FRANCES G. TRIMBLE

HOUSTON — Texas course builder Sam Sakocius and partners Terry and Mac Brown have ventured into the world of course ownership with Magnolia Creek Golf Club, in League City, Texas, south of here. It's a first for SAJO Construction, of nearby Richmond.

"We had been approached before [about part ownership] but we had a set of parameters that had to be met before we got involved," Sakocius said. "For one thing, we wanted the project to be in a fast-growing area within 100 miles of Houston, which League City is. And we wanted to be in partnership with a strong developer with previous experience."

That developer turned out to be Kinsel Industries Inc., a major player in large-scale industrial, commercial and housing projects. As plans for the 1,100-acre Magnolia Creek subdivision developed, Kinsel decided to set aside 400 acres for a golf course. At that point, Kinsel's Lynn Watkins contacted SAJO, because he was unsure of what could be accomplished with the site.

The land was flat, featureless, and dotted with fallow trees. "There wasn't much good there to save," Sakocius noted. However, because the area needs golf facilities, and because of the proposed extension to high-volume Bay Area Boulevard to the Magnolia Creek property, the property had potential.

Course architect Tom Clark of Ault, Clark & Associates, of Kensington, Md., was brought on board to design a 56-hole complex with links-style characteristics. The terrain has been cleared and drained, and 750,000 yards of earth have been moved to create what Clark described as "simulated dunes - pot bunkers with sod-stacked sides - links concepts you would expect to see in the UK." Clark added that a canal or "burn" runs alongside some holes and crosses others. A single lake has been constructed for water retention because, in Clark's words, "lakes are not traditionally found on links courses."

Clark has crafted a design with a medley of challenges. "There will be a great variety of short and long holes," he said, "par fours ranging from 281 yards to 475 yards and both reachable and non-reachable par five's. Each nine measures between 3,500 and 3,600 yards from the championship tees."

Builder Sakocius described the plantings to be added as, "native vegetation to give it a rustic, windswept, dunesy feel." He added, "Tom Clark has an extensive design record and all of the people involved in this project have seen and experienced the old Scottish courses we are trying to recreate. That includes greens that have open approaches and closely mown collection areas at the sides and back. The typically stiff Gulf Coast winds, like the strong breezes of coastal Scotland and Ireland, contribute another links-type feature."

Construction at Magnolia Creek began in November 1999, and the course is scheduled to have 18 holes in play by this coming November. Golf Solutions Inc. will manage the property, and Trey Stiles, a 20-year veteran of the golf business, has been tapped as head professional. Though Magnolia Creek will be first and foremost a golf facility, Sam Sakocius says that the Richard Williams-designed clubhouse will feature "the type of banquet and dining accommodations golfers expect to find at a 36-hole establishment."
Fream’s Andaman Club completes front nine

By ANDREW OVERBECK

THAHTAY KHUN ISLAND, Myanmar — Precipitation, and large amounts of it, have dictated the construction schedule of the 18-hole Fream and Dale Golfplan-designed course here at the Andaman Club in southern Myanmar. It is fitting, then, that the first nine holes will open in November, following this year’s rainy season.

"Last year between June and November we had over 15 feet of rain and that created certain construction problems," said Fream. "I don't get any easy jobs and we have been working three years to get these nine holes done."

According to Fream, working between the rainy seasons stretches out the construction schedule because "you have to do everything and get the grass up before the rains come—or else you lose it all."

Rainfall was not the only factor that impacted Fream’s design. Construction of the course has been undertaken using local labor and basic methods.

"We didn’t do what we would do in California or Tennessee as far as golf design," said Fream. "It is a nice course and the site is magnificent and the golf is going to be good. But it isn’t overly extravagant because we are doing most of the work by hand. We have to do things that are practical in circumstance and then the course must be maintainable mostly by walk-behind equipment."

The construction employed between 125 and 150 local laborers, who did everything from sand capping the fairways to blasting through rock by hand.

"This isn’t a high-tech operation," said Fream. "You do it the way you can get it done. It isn't practical to bring in high-priced equipment and put people out of work."

While the construction methods may not be high-tech, the results are certainly up to par. The course is set on undulating terrain, features views of the Andaman Sea and is surrounded by jungle vegetation.

"It is a unique site," he said, "with the massive trees, elevation change and views off in the horizon of smaller islands."

The highlight of the front nine is the 170-meter par-3 third hole which features a 75-foot drop from tee to green, eight different teeing positions and views of Thailand and Myanmar.

All 18 holes of the course are due to open in summer 2001. However, the resort hotel, which is popular with vacationing Thais, is expanding and Fream has been asked to put in another nine holes. "We may be here another three years," he said.

JOHNSTON TO DESIGN BLACKWATER

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — Clyde Johnston has been retained to design an 18-hole semi-private course at Blackwater, a 600-acre community in Santee, S.C.

The 6,800-yard, par-72 course will be called Blackwater Golf and Fish Club. The three finishing holes of the course will be framed by the shoreline of Lake Marion, the largest lake in South Carolina. Completion of the course is expected in the fall of 2001.

September 2000 23
Rulewich set to refurbish Palmetto Dunes

BERNARDSTON, Mass. — Golf architect Roger Rulewich has signed aboard to perform a complete makeover of the Robert Trent Jones Sr. course at Palmetto Dunes Resort on Hilton Head Island, S.C. Construction will start in May 2001 and will involve all 18 holes, including the rebuilding of the greens, tees and bunkers, along with drainage work.

"Robert Trent Jones Sr. gave me my start in this business. We spent more than 30 years together, so this is a special project," Rulewich said. "I'm excited about adding our touch to the tradition and heritage of this vintage golf course."

Established in 1969, the Roger Rulewich Group is a golf course design and construction firm based in Bernardston, Mass. It has provided services for courses including Medinah, Bellerive and Valderrama. Prior to forming the firm, Rulewich spent 34 years as a design associate with Robert Trent Jones, Sr., including 21 years as senior designer.

"One of Robert Trent Jones, Sr.'s greatest talents was inspiring dedicated people to help him fulfill the obligations of completing an incredible list of new and remodeled courses. His courses took shape more from his 'eye' on site than from the detail of his plans," Rulewich explained. "He taught me the value of a hands-on approach to design that involves the skills of many others to interpret and execute your ideas."

The Roger Rulewich Group has also teamed with Jaime Ortiz-Patino, president of the Valderrama Golf Club in Spain. Rulewich implemented Ortiz-Patino's plan to remodel the third, seventh, and 17th holes. The changes were made to add length to the course for future professional tournaments, including European Tour events and November's American Express World Golf Championship. Previously, Valderrama played 6,818 yards; it now plays 6,993 yards.

"We're extremely pleased with the way the project turned out," Rulewich said. "We achieved our goals of adding significant yardage without compromising the integrity of the course."

Husky course

Continued from page 19

a school logo and a description of that university on an inside placard. Near the cart staging area, 10 flagpoles fly the Pac-10 flags.

The clubhouse – the Varsity Club – is painted white with purple trim. Five TV sets inside play nothing but highlights of famous Husky events. The course continues the theme throughout the facility, including scorecard, bag tags, course flags, and so on.

Construction is scheduled to begin next summer on the project's second phase, which will include another 18-hole track, the Open Course. John Fought is designing this new course also, and plans call for an opening in the spring of 2003. The Open Course has been named in part as a tribute to the British Open. It will feature rolling mounds and Scottish-type playing conditions. While the Open Course is mostly devoid of trees, the University Course contains a blend of deciduous and evergreen trees.

"Given the combination of ideal soil conditions, tree cover and elevation change, we feel this is as fine a golf site as we have seen in the Northwest," Vincent said of WNGC, which encompasses 520 acres. Some 100 custom home lots, mostly along the University Course, are part of the project.
BlackHorse
Continued from page 19

Muirhead and Ken Dye. "I'm very excited about the BlackHorse project," he said. "The Jacobsen/Hardy group has designed a challenging and traditional, yet very aesthetically pleasing, layout that has enhanced the surrounding areas. BlackHorse creates an environmental sanctuary for wildlife and golfers alike." Matt Swanson, former director of golf at Ravenaex CC in Houston, has been appointed head golf professional.

Committed to protecting the environmental integrity of the site Jacobson and Hardy went to great lengths to protect the trees, to minimize the effects on the land and to maximize environmental stewardship. The course feature several wetlands and oxbows with palmetto and other native plant species that attract birds such as ducks, egrets, and sand hill cranes. The fairways use Tifsport grass, while the greens feature Tifeagle. Both Bermuda species are new to Houston-area daily-fee courses.

"We've taken advantage of the natural terrain and features of the area in order to challenge all golfers," said Peter Jacobsen, a 22-year veteran of the PGA Tour and former golf commentator. "The use of the creek, lakes and wetlands, as well as the sand quarry and trees make this course unique among daily fee courses here. The course details, layout and environmental use of the land make it a special course for Houstonians.

The developer and owner of BlackHorse, Redstone Golf Properties, serves as the holding company for additional golf properties to be purchased, developed or managed by The Redstone Companies. The company provides management for two Rees Jones-designed golf clubs in Richmond: the private ShadowHawk GC, and the resort-style Houstonian GC, an amenity to The Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa in Houston.

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Nicklaus/Els
Continued from page 19

plans, layouts and feature details, and technical specifications. The venture's designs will be branded, marketed, and promoted independently of Nicklaus Design, using the name, image and endorsement of Ernie Els, Els' manager, Nic Frangos, approached Nicklaus Design last year to discuss opportunities for Els to work with the Golden Bear and his firm to learn the business of golf course design.

"Jack Nicklaus is the most highly regarded Tour professional designing golf courses today," Frangos said. "His firm has an established reputation of being one of the most talented, comprehensive, full-service design companies worldwide. Ernie wants to do more than simply lend his name to a golf course; he wants to be involved in the design business for years to come. It made sense for us to approach the Nicklaus organization to propose the joint venture.

Just as Nicklaus began his design career over 30 years ago working with such noted architects as Dick Wilson, Pete Dye and Desmond Muirhead, Els aspires to follow a similar pattern, Frangos said, learning from the best and eventually evolving into his own design company. Currently, the group is looking at several opportunities for Els' first design project.

"My staff and I are looking forward to working with Ernie," Nicklaus said. "I have long admired Ernie as a player. At the same time, I have admired him as a person. I am certain that if we are able to provide him the support and guidance he needs, once that is combined with his desire to excel, Ernie will become as talented a golf course designer as he is a player."
choose the best part of the area, design a course, and build it within the budget. Eleven companies applied, and we won."

BEAR REPELLENT BACKFIRES

Nobody thinks of Alaska as a mecca for golf, and it's not. This new course brings the state's total to 19. But the season runs from May until late September or early October, Nelson said, and in June and July you can play around the clock. "This is the land of the midnight sun," he said, "and in the summer they'll start foursomes off at eight o'clock at night. This course will easily see 35,000 or 40,000 rounds a year."

Wildlife added a special dimension to the construction phase. "The whole area is environmentally sensitive," Nelson said. "The area we chose is in a woodland with a riparian stream that comes down to form an alluvial fan. It's a high habitat for bears, wolves, foxes, moose - all kinds of animals."

"Everybody who worked on the course carried a can of bear repellent in the event of attack," he said. "It is actually pepper spray. You've got to make sure to spray it on the bear and not on yourself. There was one guy from the 'lower 48' who didn't know any better. He thought it was like insect repellent and sprayed it all over himself - and man, he just went wild, because it affects your nervous system. It really works on bears, too."

Moose proved to be the most destructive beasts, especially on the fourth green, which sits way out in a remote corner of the site. "That green was completely destroyed when a couple of moose rutted there," Nelson said. "They love to do their mating rituals on putting greens for some reason, and that green hasn't fully come back yet."

The animals haven't left the area, but nonetheless Army officials have declared the course safe for play.

NO SAFE SLICES

Nelson said he didn't design the Creek Course to be unusually difficult. The extreme slope rating of 142, he said, has mostly to do with the 100 yards of nearly impenetrable forest between holes.

"Beyond the proper maintained rough, where you get into the jungle, the ball goes in there and it's gone," he said. "Eventually the Army is going to have to clean that out - it's just incredibly overgrown. I talked to a guy on the slope committee, who said they'd come back in a year and do another review. The rating will probably go down after that. It wasn't designed to be that hard. It's just that if you hit a bad slice, it's all over."

Why the huge space between fairways? "The job specified 300 feet of natural area between them, mostly because of wildlife habitat," Nelson said. "The animals like the forest edges and they love to hide between the fairways."

The course's length should not pose an undue problem for golfers, he said. "The 11th hole is about 640 yards from the gold tees, and 18 is close to 600," he said. "But you can almost get there in two, because these are big downhill shots. You can hit it 300 yards off the tee, so it works well."

Nelson has been involved in designing more than 100 courses worldwide, including numerous layouts in Asia and the South Pacific. He recently moved his headquarters from Hawaii to Mill Valley, Calif., near San Francisco.

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Del Webb to add more new courses to REIT

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PHOENIX, Ariz. — After more than four decades of developing "active adult" communities and building golf courses, Del Webb Corp. has taken a new direction with its golf operations. While the company manages 16 courses that it has built over the years, it has also established a real estate investment trust (REIT) as an entity to hold some of its golf course assets.

"The company builds terrific golf assets and then gives them away to home owners," said Henry DeLozier, vice president of golf operations. "Two years ago, Del Webb determined to make a transition from giving away courses to transferring ownership into a closely held REIT and turning golf operations into a profit center."

Of Del Webb's 16 courses, six are under the REIT and 10 are dedicated to the homeowners' associations. The courses in the REIT have all opened in the last two years. However, in the next three to four years, Del Webb will be adding 14 more courses to its existing communities.

"Of the 14 new courses, eight will be under the REIT, four are promised to homeowners and two are still up in the air," said DeLozier.

EXPLOITING A NICHE MARKET

Del Webb, which did $2 billion in sales last year alone, is experiencing continuing growth for two reasons according to DeLozier. "One, we are selling a lot of homes. Two, we are in a lot of really strong markets," he said.

While over development and lack of new players is leading to over supply in some parts of the country, Del Webb has remained somewhat insulated from the challenges facing both developers and existing courses.

"We are unique to the golf industry because we have the competitive advantage of full golf courses," said DeLozier. "Our residents can play on any day of the week, whereas many courses in overbuilt markets struggle because they cannot fill off-peak capacity. We have a good demographic. Our golfers are ready to play — not only do they have more discretionary income, they also have more discretionary time."

Even though 20 to 25 percent of Del Webb residents are golfers, anywhere from 20 to 50 percent of golfers are visitors, said DeLozier. New rates have been introduced to entice visitors, while still preserving...
Carl M. Freeman Golf acquires Hell's Point

BETHANY BEACH, Del. — With its goals firmly set on expanding in the Virginia Beach area, Carl M. Freeman Golf has purchased Hell's Point Golf Club located in Virginia Beach, Va.

The management company also owns and operates Bear Trap Dunes Golf Club, in Ocean View, Del., and The Bay Club, just outside Ocean City, Md.

Hell's Point Golf Club, which opened in 1982, was designed by Rees Jones. The 6,766 yard, par-72 layout places an emphasis on strategy, rather than length, with creative fairway angles, challenging greens and 61 sand traps.

"The purchase of Hell's Point marks the beginning of our growth within the Virginia Beach golf market," said Jeff Wine, vice president of Carl M. Freeman Golf. "This valuable addition to our Mid-Atlantic golf course portfolio will enable us to capitalize on our strengths and successes in course quality that we've built in the Delaware and Maryland coastal area."

Tom Stevenson will continue his role of managing the facility, and the other staff members will join the Freeman Golf team. Assisting with the operations at Hell's Point will be Bill Hamilton, director of golf operations for Carl M. Freeman Golf.

IGM MAINTAINING SILVER LAKES

LAKELAND, Fla. — International Golf Maintenance (IGM) has taken over the maintenance operation at Silver Lakes Country Club, a 27-hole course at a residential resort community in Helendale, Calif. "IGM has made visible improvements to the course in a short amount of time," said Bobbi Byington-Rourke, general manager of Silver Lakes. The new arrangement began June 1.

LinksTime, e2e team up

BELLEVUE, Wash. — In an effort to continue developing strategies that will provide greater traffic and exposure for its member courses, LinksTime, a provider of Internet marketing and software solutions to the golf marketplace, has teamed with e2e Golf Solutions, a company that offers end-to-end software and Internet services for the golf industry.

"This alliance is congruent with our strategy of offering the best and convenient service for golfers and golf course owners alike," said Jim Sorenson, president of LinksTime. "With this partnership, e2e Golf and LinksTime are providing a broader reach for golfers and creating valuable marketing opportunities for golf course owners to better promote their facilities."

Through the alliance, tee times at LinksTime's member courses will be accessible online through e2e Golf's tee time reservation network. The network consists of more than 200 websites including AOL, Mindspring, CNN/SI.com, USAToday.com, as well as 107,000 travel agency locations.

"This is a milestone in building the online community of courses at which the golfer can access and book tee times," said Larry Lippon, president and CEO of e2e Golf Solutions. "e2e Golf has built one of the most extensive tee time reservation networks in the industry with over 500 online golf courses and hundreds of travel and Internet partners."

As part of the reciprocal agreement, e2e Golf's inventory of course tee times will be available on the LinksTime website (www.linkstime.com). LinksTime courses are located throughout the U.S.

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The Orchards

Continued from page 27

clubhouse is a fitting complement to the course, which is perhaps one of the best-preserved examples of Ross' architectural genius, Zito added. In fact, Massachusetts Golf Association (MGA) members recently recognized The Orchards GC as the state's pre-eminent "hidden gem" and will hold the 2001 State Amateur here.

Del Webb

Continued from page 27

affordable rates for residents.

While the growth in the number of golfers has been stagnant, DeLozier is more concerned with other economic indicators, directing his attention instead to the housing market.

"People who buy homes from us are in most cases selling a place before they move," he said. "So it is the person who qualifies to buy their old place that we are the most concerned about."

ZOOMERS

As the market for its resort-style communities has grown, more active baby boomers are now becoming residents, thus changing Del Webb's course design strategy.

"We call them 'zoomers,'" said DeLozier. "These are people who expect high quality golf. So we are giving them courses that are longer and more challenging."

For instance, at Sun City Hilton Head, the first course, Okatie Creek, was built in the traditional Del Webb model of resort golf—a nice and easy course that is relatively flat and has few obstacles. "On the second course, Hidden Cypress, we asked Mark McCumber [the designer] to turn up the heat a little bit," said DeLozier. "The course is 7,100 yards and is all the challenge you can want." That course opened in May.

GOING FORWARD

While Del Webb will be adding courses to its existing communities over the next three to four years, the company is also looking at other markets. Currently, there are no details on where these developments may be built, but Del Webb's most recent venture in Illinois may be an indication of future plans.

In June, the first Sun City community outside of the Sun Belt opened in Huntley, Ill. Sun City Huntley includes Whisper Creek Golf Course, which was designed by Greg Nash and Billy Casper.

"Many of our buyers in the Sun Belt come to us from the Midwest," said DeLozier. "Our polling told us that there is an audience that will always consider themselves Chicagoans and they don't want to get too far away from family and business activities."

Starting this year, full-access memberships have been offered on two levels: "regional," for golfers who live within a 40-75-mile radius of the club ($1,250 initiation, $1,500 in annual dues); and "national," for those who live outside the 75-mile zone ($750 initiation, $1,000 in annual dues). The membership program at The Orchards is unique to New England, "but it's commonplace in resort areas, and in Britain, where many prestigious clubs offer 'international' memberships," Zito explained. "The response to this membership policy has been enthusiastic."

The location of The Orchards makes this membership approach feasible. Located just off Interstate 91, South Hadley is accessible to metropolitan New York, Hartford, Providence and Boston. Palmer has already welcomed new members from 15 states. The newly renovated clubhouse at The Orchards GC
Course valuations flat or declining

Continued from page 1

frenzied market of the past few years seems to be “taking a breather.” Hirsh sees no imminent “bust” in the market, but said it is clear that course buyers have become more price conscious. Two years ago, 90 percent of respondents to a similar GPA survey said they perceived course values to be on the rise. Last year, half of them believed prices were still climbing. But this year, half of respondents said values were stagnant, and another 29 percent reported that golf course prices were actually falling. Only 21 percent perceived values as being on the upswing.

IMPACT OF INTEREST RATES

Hirsh ascribed the shift to the interest-rate environment. “There is certainly a reality that rising interest rates negatively affect the value of golf courses—and all income-producing properties, for that matter,” he explained. “The rising rates create higher costs for money and lower values. But there’s still nothing to suggest that revenues and cash flows are declining.”

“Greens fees are still going up, and cash flows should be improving, at least in theory. “But the bottom line is, that could be perceived as real value declining, because the same amount of net income won’t create the same amount of value it used to,” he said. “With interest rates higher, in order to get the same amount of value, you’d need more income.”

Among the survey’s biggest surprises, Hirsh said, is that 50 percent of responding firms indicated that there are more opportunities for private facilities over daily-fee operations. From 1997 to 1999, management companies looking to buy golf clubs showed an overwhelming preference for public courses. Suddenly, that has changed.

“While the golf course industry continues to churn out more than 300 new daily-fees each year, it’s become clear to me—through my own experience, and through the results of this particular survey—that certain influential management firms now see more opportunity on the private side,” Hirsh said. “This could be a sign that the daily-fee market represents less upside opportunity as perceived by investors. There are a whole lot of daily-fee facilities out there—72 percent of all the courses in the country—and some people have just decided to focus on private clubs.”

ACTION HEATS UP IN NORTH

Equally surprising, Hirsh said, is the new interest in courses in the North and Northeast. Last year, 65 percent of acquiring companies preferred Sunbelt locations, but that attitude is definitely changing.

One reason, Hirsh said, could be that buyers see the Southeast and Southwest as saturated with courses. Another could be that management firms have awakened to the advantages of running courses in such places as Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New England.

“There are many operational issues that affect profitability,” Hirsh said. “In the South, they have to open all year long, and maintained all year long. In many cases, in Florida in particular, people don’t want to play golf during the summertime, but that’s when they have the most tee times to sell, because of the daylight. In the winter, they can’t put anybody on the course after about one-thirty in the afternoon.

“In the North, the playing season is shorter, but they can sell tee times up til four o’clock. That’s a big advantage,” Hirsh said. “They can close in the winter and not have to pay people to maintain the course then. Consequently, you might enjoy strong cash flow. So the acquiring companies see a lot of opportunity in well-positioned cool-season courses. There are a lot of population centers in the Northeast and Midwest.”

Hirsh, whose company performs valuation, consulting and brokerage services, said quite a few companies are actively looking for acquisitions in the North. “Gotham Golf Partners, Arnold Palmer Golf Management Company, Crown Golf Properties, LinksCorp—those are just a few that I know are looking favorably upon the Northeast,” he said.

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Turf Partners, ABT deals done, Simplot busy putting pieces together

By ANDREW OVERBECK

BOISE, Idaho — With the acquisition of Turf Partners completed and the purchase of turfgrass seed and specialty distribution assets from the now-defunct AgriBioTech (ABT) finalized, Simplot Turf and Horticulture (Simplot T&H) is now putting the new pieces of its expanding business together.

“We are creating a fairly new organization out of parts of the Simplot Company,” said Bill Whitacre, president of Simplot T&H, who left his CEO post at St. Joseph, Missouri-based Research Seeds to join the company May 1. “This is a work in progress. We are building the systems and processes right now.”

The challenge, according to Whitacre, is staying focused on customers while at the same time working on organizational and structural issues. “We are forming a central administrative group so that we can move the transactional processes through,” he said. “This allows the business units to focus on the customer and run the business.”

Simplot T&H will be moving to new digs in Boise this fall.

SIMPLOT PARTNERS

After months of negotiations, Simplot T&H finally purchased Turf Partners, Eco Soil System’s distribution arm, in late July for $61.5 million, including $38.5 million in bank debt and vendor payables. The company is already moving to integrate Turf Partner’s 25 locations and 200 employees and has changed the name of the new distribution division to Simplot Partners. Nick Spardy will be the general manager of the company, which will continue to be based in San Diego.

In the near term, Simplot Partners gives the company access to markets in the Northeast and Midwest. However, Simplot T&H is looking to do more.

“There are areas that Simplot Partners is not strong in, such as Texas and the Southeast and we will need to analyze those areas,” said Whitacre. “Our objective is to be a nationwide organization.”

Simplot T&H will also carry forward Eco Soil’s e-commerce initiative, which is, for now, a work in progress.

“There will be an e-commerce revolution in this market sector,” said Whitacre. “[Our website] will create value way beyond the logistical process of fulfilling an order. It will be more of a tool, helping the superintendent manage his business and budget.”

In addition to strengthening its distribution network and adding e-commerce capabilities, Simplot Partners has also agreed to market Eco Soil’s proprietary FreshPack products. Simplot agreed to purchase a minimum of $5 million of FreshPack products during the first two years of its five-year distribution deal.

Whitacre said the company is also looking at the marketability of Eco Soil’s BioJet biological distribution system. “We are staying close on those products,” he said. “We believe that it [BioJet] has an excellent opportunity in the marketplace.”

ABT VARIETIES

In addition to turfgrass varieties, Simplot T&H also picked up some distribution locations in the ABT buyout. However, it is already looking at consolidating those companies.

“The Las Vegas site is new, so we will... Continued on page 37

BRIEFS

ASIC ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The newly elected officers and directors of the American Society of Irrigation Consultants (ASIC) assumed their offices here, at the annual conference of the society. Officers are elected to one-year terms for the fiscal year 2000-2001. Directors are elected to three year terms.

Brian Vinchesi, Irrigation Consulting Inc., Pepperell, Mass. was elected to the presidency. Jim Barrett, James Barrett Associates, Inc., Montclair, N.J. assumed the office of vice president. Dan Benner, Hydro Environmental Inc., Marietta, Ga. is the new secretary and David D. Davis, David D. Davis and Associates, Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. assumes the duties of treasurer. All of the officers are Professional Members of ASIC.


BARENBRUG NAMES ZELLEY

OGDENSBURG, N.J. — Jennifer Zelley has been appointed as territory manager for New Jersey. Prior to joining Barenbrug, Zelley was associated with Manheimer-Hertzog as a horticulturist.

HARMONY APPOINTS GARRETT

CHESAPEAKE, Va. — Harmony Products, Inc. has appointed Lowell Garrett as plant manager of the new Harmony-Shenandoah Valley manufacturing facility being constructed by Harmony in Harrisonburg. The new facility will have the capacity to produce approximately 65,000 tons of fertilizer per year.

SETTER JOINS AQUATROLS

CHERRY HILL, N.J. — Joe Setter has joined Aquatrols as the new territory manager for the southeast region. Setter will cover Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

JOHN DEERE 4700 COMPACT UTILITY TRACTOR WINS AESO AWARD

MILWAUKEE — The John Deere 4700 compact utility tractor has been given an AESO Award by Resource: Engineering & Technology for a Sustainable World. The award was presented to the John Deere Commercial Products Group at the 13th ASAE annual international meeting here. AESO awards are given each year to honor companies that release the best new products engineered for agriculture, food, biological and related systems. “We are proud that the AESO program has recognized the 4700 for its innovation,” said Terry Brown, product manager compact tractors for John Deere Commercial Products. “The 4700 is the highest horsepower tractor with hydrostatic transmission in its class. We think this is one element that made it stand out above other entries.”

Parkway helps supers get rid of excess supply

HOUSTON — Sensing a need to relieve supers of excess chemicals and fertilizers, Parkway Research has created CleanUpTheChemicalRoom.com, a service that turns unwanted inventory into a usable asset.

Parkway Research, a national manufacturer and blender of specialty golf chemicals and fertilizers, launched the website in February as a way to help superintendents and boost company sales at the same time.

“We got the idea that if we can figure out a way for a superintendent to get rid of stock he is not going to use,” said company president Ray Kimmel, “then perhaps we can get some of our stuff in there.”

For example, if a superintendent has 10 cases of Roundup that he wants to get rid of, the company would buy that from him for a percentage of the market value and give him credit for Parkway products in that dollar amount. The company then turns around and sells the Roundup to interested buyers.

Parkway arranges the shipping and those costs come out of the initial transaction.

“We acquire products at a cost that is very reasonable. And the trade in value of our manufactured goods in effect brings down our cost of goods,” said Kimmel. “As a result we make two customers happy. One gets rid of stuff he didn’t

Continued on page 33
Course management software coming on stream

By ANDREW OVERBECK

Two software companies are close to rolling out superintendent-specific software systems that are aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of course maintenance. The turf management programs both key in on insect and disease identification, inventory and equipment control, personnel management, scheduling and course budgeting.

While the software is intended for use by superintendents, each company is pitching its systems first to management companies.

"It is easier to work with one management company that has 110 courses than it is to work with 110 different courses," said Al D'Amelio, founder of eturfgrass.com. "Plus, it is a tougher sell to individual superintendents because some don't want all of that empirical data in one place. However, management companies want that information."

ETURFGRASS.COM

D'Amelio, whose original company was called Computer Diagnostic Links, has been developing his software program for the past seven years and is currently in talks with International Golf Maintenance to launch the product. To develop Centereach, N.Y.-based eturfgrass.com, he has worked with superintendents, turfgrass students at Cornell, members of the U.S. Golf Association's Green Section, golf course architects, and "anyone else who would listen."

The program contains a constantly updated turfgrass disease and insect database complete with descriptions and photographs. The software program can also offer tips and information on methods of application and product information. The course management tools allow superintendents to track personnel records and scheduling, inventory and maintenance of machinery, and chemical treatment history. All of this information can be remotely accessed in order to monitor course operations. D'Amelio has also created video tutorials, including sessions on Environmental Protection Agency regulations and Occupational and Safety and Hazard Administration rules.

The program is customized for each course and will initially cost roughly $10,000, said D'Amelio. The company also charges a monthly maintenance fee of $149. The software is available on CD-ROM, and quarterly updates will be available over the Internet or via CD-ROM.

GREENSCAPE MANAGER

Another entrant into the turfgrass software arena is Hobe Sound, Fla.-based Phoenix Software Systems, Inc. They have been developing Greenscape Manager for the past eight months and are now looking to team up with a larger management company to complete the development phase of the project.

"We are looking at management companies as a source of funding because they have a vested interest in developing this type of application," said Matthew Graham, vice president of product development. "The software will allow them to track course operations from a central location. They can take a comparative look at courses in a region and make recommendations and improvements."

The Windows-based software includes three static databases that will define all plants, diseases and insects affecting particular regions. It will also provide information such as current market value, health and condition, identification and location to establish a green asset valuation. The program's 14 modules will include soil, water, equipment inventory and maintenance; course layout graphics; employee records, as well as comprehensive expense and budgeting modules. Cost has yet to be set for the system.

Phoenix is now working on strategic partnerships with Internet providers and soil analysis companies to put together regional service agreements. According to Graham, once funding is arranged, the program will be ready for release in a year.

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John Deere updates logo

MOLINE, Ill. — John Deere has updated its leaping deer trademark to appear stronger and more dynamic with a greater emphasis placed on the John Deere name.

“John Deere updates logo”

Rain Bird extends supplier agreement with Pebble Beach

AZUSA, Calif. — Rain Bird has extended its exclusive agreement with Pebble Beach Resorts as the official irrigation supplier. The new agreement runs through 2003. Rain Bird will have official supplier status on all Pebble Beach Co. managed properties including Pebble Beach Golf Links, Spyglass Hill Golf Course, Del Monte Golf Course, the Links at Spanish Bay, and Del Monte Golf Course.

“When we installed Rain Bird five years ago, we were convinced that it could provide us the level of technology and commitment to service that we required,” said Ted Horton, vice president of resource management. “The U.S. Open preparation this year has confirmed that belief.”

As part of the agreement, Rain Bird will also receive input from Pebble Beach Co.’s superintendents for product research and development purposes.

“Rain Bird has benefited from its relationship with Pebble Beach,” said Mike Donoghue, Rain Bird Golf Division director. “The stature of the golf course, the expectations for playing conditions, the weather, and the environmental sensitivity of the site combine to provide a true challenge for an irrigation system.”

Parkway

Continued from page 31

need or want and the other buys it at a reduced cost.”

So far the new service has worked well, said Kimmel. “We get a lot of inquiries for products that have either expired registrations or are too hazardous,” he said. “We turn down a lot of trades, but we accept most. We only take stuff that we know we can resell–most golf course specialty chemicals that are in original sealed containers and don’t have expired registration we can dispose of fairly quickly.”

Products are inspected once they arrive at Parkway, and if they are in resellable condition the deal is complete and credit is issued to the seller. Unacceptable products are shipped back to sellers at their expense.

As the new stock rolls in, Parkway salespeople are given a list of what has been acquired. “We sell it off quickly,” said Kimmel, “because we make those products available at very good prices.”

The new service has been well-received by Parkway’s 3,500 golf course customers and has given its salespeople a new and valuable selling tool.

While Kimmel isn’t sure if the new service has attracted customers, he does know that it has helped to strengthen his existing customer base. “I don’t think it has helped to develop those we already had.”

Clean up the chemical room.com also lists available products on the Internet.

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Sellers, for the most part, will be distributors, manufacturers and others. Shipping costs will be passed along to the seller and the buyer will be charged a two percent transaction fee. Those firms listing chemicals must have a pesticide dealer's license and those buying chemicals must have a commercial applicator’s license.

"Sellers have lots of choices. We don't force them into a mode," said Albert. "They can put a product on as an auction or at a fixed price; the seller can be anonymous or identified; they can use our shipping or their own; they can use our escrow services or their own; and they can segment their listings down to the county level."

Most of the transactions are anonymous, said Albert, because sellers either don’t want to upset existing distribution channels or tip their hand to other companies and customers in the industry. Many sellers, for example, are using the website to explore other markets, extend market reach and move additional products quickly and cheaply.

"This is not set up just for excess inventory, although that was the original idea," said Albert. "Most of the stuff that is being sold is being sold in season and it is not excess product."

XS Turf buyers will primarily be end-users.

"The only reason you would want to buy on our site is because you are saving money," said Albert. Superintendents will not only be able to take advantage of competitive pricing, they will also be able to set their own prices. "Buyers can name their price and any seller can choose to meet that price," said Albert.

Quality control is also a priority. The site deals in standard goods only and they must come from the manufacturer's original packaging. The buyer has 48 hours to inspect the goods before XS Inc. releases the money from the escrow account to the seller.

"If it is not precisely what the customer ordered, all he has to do is call us and we take it from there. He doesn't have to worry about it at all," said Albert.

From the time the deal is finished, shipping time is usually seven to 10 days, although the company is working to get that down to two to three days for shipments under 150 pounds and four to six days for larger shipments.

CONTINUATION

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GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT – DHARRAN, SAUDI ARABIA

One of the world’s largest producers and exporters of oil and gas is seeking a Golf Course Superintendent to oversee construction of a new 18-hole golf course. Responsibilities include planning and managing of the construction and maintenance of the course, which is situated in a multi-national residential community complex situated in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The ideal candidate will have a minimum of a BS degree in Turfgrass Management, or a major in a related field, and possess extensive experience in the following areas:

• Evaluation of golf course design
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• Overseeing sod propagation and associated nursery operations
• Experience in desert climate preferred

Annual renewable contract, which includes round trip flight, bachelor living accommodation provided. Salary negotiable. Applicants should submit a current CV, plus names of 3 personal/professional references to: Hunter Industries, Attn: Human Resources – 8014, 1940 Diamond Street, San Marcos, CA 92069 or hr@hunterindustries.com

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number of e-commerce initiatives targeting the golf course market, Albert contends that XSTurf already has an advantage because it offers anonymity, the security of escrow accounts and so many ways to sell products.

"There is the catalog model which lists manufacturer's products at list prices," said Albert. "But if I am a buyer why do I want to buy from the site for the same or higher prices? There is convenience, but not much value."

As far as the request-for-quote model, Albert dismissed that as "great for the buyer, but bad for the seller—since the buyer is not committed the seller has little incentive to respond."

XSTurf aims to penetrate all courses that have an annual budget of at least $100,000 for chemicals, seeds and parts—an estimated 10,000 courses.

Morgan Stanley invested $20 million in the company in December, and the company is in another round of strategic financing right now with Credit Suisse First Boston.

In preparation for the launch of XSTurf.com, the company will be adding turf seed and equipment experts.

Going forward, Albert is confident. "This is not just a theory," he said. "We have proven that the free market exchange is the most efficient market mechanism leading to the best way to move inventory and reduce the over all costs for the end user."
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Simplot additions

Continued from page 31

hold on to that," said Whitacre. "In Phoenix integration is beginning already. And in Kentucky, we are all around it, so that will be one that we will be developing consolidation plans for."

On the turfgrass side, Simplot T&H has picked up hot-selling L-93 creeping bentgrass, Southshore creeping bentgrass, Jamestown II chewings fescue, and Jaguar 3 turf-type tall fescue. The company now has all the distribution facilities, growing contracts, germ plasm and related genetic research for these turfgrass varieties.

These new assets are already being integrated, said Whitacre. "We were very strategic with the assets that we purchased. They are complimentary to our existing varieties," he said. "We were putting business plans together around these varieties 90 days ago."

According to Whitacre, these varieties will be available through independent seed companies and distributors as well as through Simplot Partners. "We will hit the market in a number of different channels," he said. "There are some market niches where we'll need more than one point of access."

Periodicals postage paid at Yarmouth, Me., and additional mailing office. Golf Course News (ISSN 1054-0644) is published monthly by United Publications Inc., 100 Lafayette St., P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096. Phone number is 207-848-0600.

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