

## San Antonio courses prepare for GCSAA championship event

By JOEL JOYNER

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America will hold its 51st championship here when 720 superintendents from around the world compete at six area golf courses. The championship leads off the annual show, taking place in Dallas, Texas, Feb. 11-18.

Six superintendents and their courses in the San Antonio area have been chosen to host the tournament. They are:

- Rob Throne, Pecan Valley Golf Club;
- Bruce Burger, The Quarry Golf Club;
- Steven Dennis, Canyon Springs Golf Club;
- Ted McClure, Tapatio Springs Resort;
- Neil Thraikill, Silverhorn Golf Club;
- and Mitchell Kiser, Fair Oaks Ranch Golf & Country Club.

With a hot and dry summer here, and an autumn that produced near-record rainfall, the hosts will attempt to have their courses in top shape for the arrival of their peers. For the seventh consecutive year, the Toro Co. will be sponsoring the four-ball championship on Sunday, Feb. 11, followed by the tournament on Feb. 12 and 13.

Todd Barker, superintendent at the Fore Lakes Golf Course, of Murray, Utah, is the defending champion.

### PECAN VALLEY: A TOUGH OLD/NEW COURSE

Having experienced a recent renovation, tornado strike and flooding at the Pecan Valley, superintendent Rob Throne is preparing his course for championship play after joking about "Texas weather at its finest."

Designed by Press Maxwell and built in 1963, the old-style course underwent a Robert Cupp-design renovation in 1999 that maintained most of the traditional flavor.

"The course was completely regrassed, and there's a new club house, maintenance facility, cart facilities, and irrigation system," said Throne. "The course was brought back to the standards it needs to be. Some greens, prone to flooding, were raised, a few bunkers were added, and a few greens were relocated to make them a little more accessible from the tee."

The recent tornado and flooding have taken a toll on the course, however. "Several bunkers need to be repaired, and several satellite units that went underwater had to be replaced. We also lost 12 trees in the tornado," said Throne. Fortunately, the course's famed oak tree, estimated to be some 800 years old, was untouched by the twister.

Even with the setbacks, Throne is excited to show the course and its challenges to his peers. "We're going to take the greens to a faster speed for the championship," said Throne. "The course plays fairly long, 7,000 yards from the tips, and the fairways are heavily tree-lined."

"The guys will want to keep their drivers in the bag," he advised. "Fairways are narrow, and even in February the roughs will be fairly thick. At that time of year the wind comes out of the north/northwest, so there's likely to be some forced carries hitting into the wind at this course. Also, the greens are not that big, only 115,000 square feet total, and all well bunkered."

### THE QUARRY: TWO COURSES IN ONE

The Quarry, rated the top public golf course in Texas in four of the past five years, offers "really two courses in an 18-hole layout," said Bruce Burger, superintendent.

Built in 1993 and designed by Keith Foster, the front nine maintains a links-style layout with a lot of native grasses, mounding in the roughs, and no trees.

"The native grasses can be severe on the front nine, and we're definitely going to step it up a notch on the greens," said Burger. "But it's the back nine that intimidates players."

Packed entirely inside an old limestone quarry, the back nine occupies only 84 acres. "I've got some rock walls that rise over 100 feet above the floor of the quarry," said Burger. "It has dramatic views and some interesting holes. The 16th hole is a 242-yard, slightly uphill play that golfers say would make a really nice par-4, except that it's a par-3."

"The 17th is our signature hole," he said. "It's a 380-yard par-4. The tee shot is hit



"Escape from Alcatraz" is the 13th hole at The Quarry GC.

across this canyon to a landing area on another ledge. It's visually intimidating when you first step up to that tee. The 18th hole is a really tough finishing hole. You're in the rocks if you hit it right, and you're in the canyon if you hit it left. It's truly a three-shot par-5, even for the best golfers."

Roughly 6,800 yards from the back tees and with plenty of rock features and native grass areas, The Quarry will demand strategy and concentration to score well.

Continued on page 35

## Michigan turfgrass program earns President's Award

By JOEL JOYNER

EAST LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program (MTESP), a public-private coalition geared specifically to issues involving golf course maintenance, will be awarded the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's (GCSAA) 2001 President's Award for Environmental Leadership.

The award will be presented Feb. 15 during the GCSAA's 72nd International Golf Course Conference and Show in Dallas, Texas. Established in 1991, the award acknowledges "an exceptional environmental contribution to the game of golf." MTESP was selected by the GCSAA for their work in improving golf courses and the environment.

Developed in 1997, MTESP coordinates the efforts of the turfgrass industry, Michigan State University, state agencies and environmental organizations. "The program was created by the willingness of the turfgrass industry to do something productive in the area of environmental protection," said program director Greg Lyman, extension specialist at MSU. The program is designed to promote and recognize the following practices:

- protecting water quality, wildlife habitat and native species;
- commitment to the protection of natural resources on the property;
- adopting pollution prevention practices (reduce waste, minimize inputs to the environment);
- complying with environmental laws and regulations;
- promoting and communicating best management practices to control potential sources of pollution.

Golf courses subscribing to the program attend a workshop that focuses on issues such as fuel storage, wellhead protection, fertilizer and pesticide storage, handling and application. The second stage of the program is a self-assessment that requires superintendents to apply the know-how from the workshop to their own courses. In the next phase, a stewardship team completes a site visit to determine how information from the workshop is being used.

### MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

To maintain membership, golf courses must have a site visit at least once in a three-year period. Annual participant fees range from \$75 for a daily-fee, nine-hole course to \$150 for a golf resort property. Stewardship site evaluations cost \$200 for a half day.

More than 150 golf courses currently participate in the program, with a target of 50 more members for the winter workshops. Half of the members in the program have completed the site-visit phase, and 30 courses to date have been certified.

The MTESP also provides information for enhancing wildlife habitat and is developing criteria for the construction or renovation of golf courses to avoid any potential compromise to the environment.

"The workshop covers a lot of material and examines the practices we use in the

Continued on page 26

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The Golden Bear Club at Keene's Point

# SHOW PREVIEW

## Finchem wins GCSAA honor

Continued from page 1

deserves considerable credit for fueling the growth and popularity of golf," said GCSAA president Scott Woodhead. "His vision, commitment and passion for the game are rivaled by few."

Finchem joined the PGA Tour team as vice president of business

affairs in 1987. After being promoted to deputy commissioner and chief operating officer by commissioner Deane Beman, Finchem succeeded Beman in 1994.

Under his leadership, donations to charities from Tour events have risen consistently each year, with \$44 million contributed in 1999. Finchem also has been a proponent in the development of the World Golf Foundation, including that Foundation's First Tee program.

The First Tee provides accessible golf facilities to young and underprivileged players. "It has great potential for growing the game and enriching literally thousands of lives through the life lessons it teaches," said Finchem.

Under Finchem's guidance, the PGA Tour staff and professional golfers have been successful in developing strategy and fundraising for the GCSAA foundation and drawing attention to the work of superin-

tendents and their courses.

"We're grateful for the support we have received from the PGA Tour under Tim Finchem's leadership," said Steve Mona, GCSAA's CEO. "The fact that all tour agronomists and TPC superintendents are GCSAA members is a testament to the relationship the two organizations have. I know he takes pride in calling himself a friend of the superintendent." ■

## MTESP awarded

Continued from page 24

industry," said Craig Hoffman, superintendent at The Rock at Woodmoor on Drummond Island, Mich. "At this course, we had to complete some updates, make adjustments in the rinse and loading pads, and add protection around the well-heads."

As a member on the program's stewardship steering committee, Hoffman also appreciates the assistance of statewide agencies and environmental organizations. "We've tried to include as many state agencies and environmental advocacy groups as possible," he said. "At our committee meetings, we've had representatives from the governor's staff, the Department of Environmental Quality, Trout Unlimited, Pheasants Unlimited and Ducks Unlimited."

### WOODHEAD TO PRESENT AWARD

GCSAA president R. Scott Woodhead will present the award to program director Lyman. "The Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program is a shining example of how groups can work together for the common good of all," said Woodhead. "I commend the program partners for their outstanding work. I hope it spurs other states to enact similar programs."

The program is supported by MSU, the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the Golf Association of Michigan, the Michigan Environmental Council, the Michigan Nature Conservancy, the Kalamazoo Nature Center and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. ■

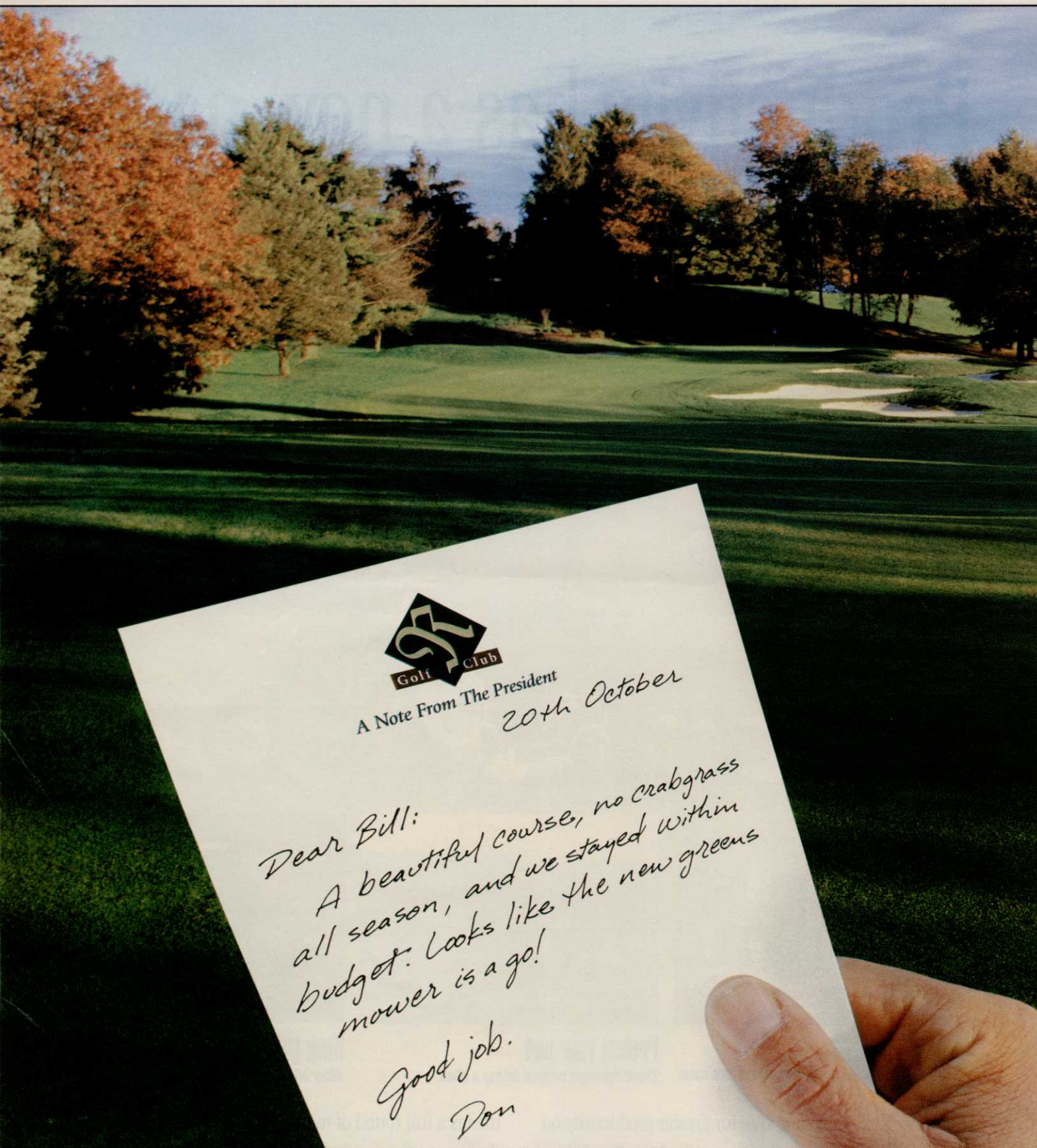
## 5,000 at CMAA

Continued from page 25

junction with the International Wine Society's live auction.

Richard Simmons, the self-proclaimed "court jester of health," will lead a "Sweatin' Session" exercise program on the morning of Jan. 31.

The closing event, on Feb. 1, promises to be a lively affair – a black-tie gala at the Marriott. The evening kicks off with a reception honoring CMAA president Warren Arseneaux. The formal dinner-dance will feature entertainment by the well-known dance band, The Pink Flamingoes. ■



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20th October

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