**Living a million-dollar dream**  
By JERRY POLING

ST. JAMES, Minn. — In 1992 at age 55, Bob Lewis Jr. had planned to retire early on disability from his job as corporate meeting planner with Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance in St. Paul.

He had a bad back and was flying up to 150,000 miles a year around the world, he was looking forward to relaxing at his Apple Valley, Minn., home with his wife.

Then came that lunch break at work in April 1992 when he remembered to check his lottery ticket. One by one, all his Powerball numbers matched. He had won $125.5 million, payable in 20 annual installments of $625,000 ($455,000 after taxes). Suddenly he was a millionaire on par and could laugh at the world: "I tell people I'm on a fixed income: I only get one check a year," Lewis said.

Contrary to what many people might have done, Lewis didn't act like a kid who had just found a $100 bill at an amusement park. He kept working for another year, as planned. Three years later in 1996, after pondering his options he made an informed decision on how to use some of his windfall. He decided to buy a golf course.

Lewis previously did not have visions of owning a course, unlike many golfers. He loved the game and was an average player by his own admission, but had quit years earlier because of his back. Except for organizing corporate golf events, the game had slipped out of his life.

So why did he choose a highly competitive and sometimes frustrating business? Lewis said he made a "good business decision and a good investment - and for the second time - had a little 'Lucky' on his side."

A close family friend, Mike Luckcraft, had become a golf pro in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and suggested that Lewis look into buying a course. Lewis had been hoping to find a seasonal business that would allow him to work part time.

With Luckcraft as an adviser, Lewis looked at several courses before hearing about a struggling 9-hole course in St. James, Minn. (pop. 5,000) about 75 miles south of the Twin Cities.

They saw many possibilities. The low-budget Watonwan Country Club in St. James wasn't much to look at, but that didn't bother Lewis. First, he saw a nice piece of land. The Watonwan River ran through the course, which had lovely views.

Bob Lewis Jr. and Mike Luckraft, head golf pro at St. James CC.

The deal, Dupay said, is the first of what could be many that FGS closes this year.

**FGS building on first contract**  
By DEREK RICE

HERSHEY, Pa. — Freedom Golf Services (FGS), which was founded by former Golf Management Group vice president Allen Dupay in January, has signed its first management contract.

FGS will take over day-to-day operations of Crockett's Ridge Golf Club in Kingsport, Tenn. This includes a scheduled closure that began in May to allow for an extensive course renovation to improve playability and turf conditions.

The deal, Dupay said, is the first of what could be many that FGS closes this year.

"We have an additional three to five properties with whom we are having discussions," Dupay said. "Our goal over the next 12 months is to acquire three or four properties of any combination of management, lease or purchase."

Dupay said the service FGS is seeing is its golf course consulting or full-service management, which he said is understandable.

"We feel that this line can be directly attributed to the fluctuations in the nation's economy," Dupay said.

That's not to say there aren't lease or purchase options out there for FGS, Dupay said.

"We've received as well, albeit to a lesser degree, inquiries from parties seeking to lease or sell their respective courses," he said.

The economy, Dupay said, was one of the main factors that led him to found FGS. He said he saw an opportunity to get involved with some good properties at good prices. At Crockett's Ridge, FGS hired Chris Weller as general manager and Raymond Perez superintendent, both of whom have a friendship with Dupay and Dan Stotomin, FGS' executive vice president and also a former Gotham vice president.

Going forward, Dupay said FGS has some clear objectives in mind as it grows.

"The vision for FGS is not to become the largest management firm or course operator in the nation," he said. "We simply try to operate each of our golf properties as if they were our own private venture, and therefore we never lose sight of the primary objective - driving bottom-line net cash flow while being cognizant not to injure customer service."

**Teamwork, communication key**  
By TED HORTON, CGCS

In my busy life as a golf course superintendent, I could seldom find enough time to accomplish half of the many tasks penciled into my daily, weekly, monthly and yearly to-do lists. How then could I be expected to take time to engineer effective relations with members of my golf course’s management staff? I found myself asking, "Why should I take time from my busy schedule for this effort?"

The answer is simple: teamwork and harmonious relationships amongst leaders is an expectation of management. No single employee is more important than another at a golf course.

The golf course management team consists of individuals who have what Williams, superintendent at Los Angeles Country Club, refers to as "different roles for similar goals." Communication and respect for one another are their tools for accomplishing the desires of the golfers and the goals of the operation.

Ted Horton, CGCS

While speaking to students of a class I teach at the Professional Golfers Career College in Temecula, Calif., Williams talked about relationships between the superintendent and the golf professional. "It’s all about relationships — and too often these relationships are adversarial," he said. "A relationship in harmony means putting issues aside for the common good of the organization."

Williams encouraged students to build harmonious relationships with golf course superintendents and offered the following suggestions:

• Hold regular meetings. Lunch or coffee together doesn't deal with the issues. Formalize the communication process.

• Maintain an open-door/open-mind policy. Listen to each other's perspectives.

• Coordinate a master calendar. Try to line up net cash flow while being cognizant not to injure customer service."
Lottery winner

Continued from previous page

The Lottery winner was unassuming, a father of four who worked as a high school math teacher. For years, he had been buying lottery tickets, but never imagined he would become a millionaire. In 2001, he won the Powerball jackpot and received $240 million, but he decided to live a simple life instead of retiring. He continued teaching and set up a charitable foundation to help children in need.

In the years since his win, the Lottery winner has been a role model for responsible gambling. He encourages people to play the lottery responsibly and to be aware of the potential risks. He also donates money to a variety of causes, including education, health care, and disaster relief.

The Lottery winner is a shining example of how one person's good fortune can bring positive change to their community. His story is a reminder that even the smallest acts of kindness can have a big impact.

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Jack used to struggle with his maintenance budget. He always looked for ways to control costs yet deliver results. Over the years, he implemented many new methods and routines. His bunkers always eluded him.

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AGC case

Continued from page 1

members are allowed to leave.

Doyle also asked the judge to place his $24,000 membership deposit in escrow because, as he said, if AGC declares bankruptcy, that money – and the money from members of AGC-operated courses across the country – will be lost.

Dixon said he was not permitted to discuss the specifics of the suits at press time, saying that a deal may be in the works. Representatives of AGC did not return calls seeking comment for this story.

GOLF COURSE NEWS