

## BRIEFS

### KEMPERSPORTS MANAGEMENT REORGANIZES

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — As part of a reorganization, Bob Wallace has been named president of KKL (Kemper, Keiser, Lesnik) Golf and Steve Skinner has been named president of Kemper Golf Management, two newly formed divisions of KemperSports Management. KKL consists of KemperSports' owned and leased properties, while Kemper Golf Management is made up of the company's third party management business. In addition to their newly added responsibilities, Wallace and Skinner will continue to oversee the two existing divisions of KemperSports. Wallace will head up AllGolf, the firm's golf practice range division, and Skinner will supervise KemperSports Development, the firm's golf development and construction management business.

### PGA TO HOLD 'JOBS IN GOLF WEEK'

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — The PGA of America has launched its "National Jobs in Golf Week" in order to showcase the potential for employment opportunities in the golf industry. The PGA will roll out the public awareness campaign during the week of March 18-22. During the week, golf course and industry employers will be encouraged to post jobs, while job seekers will be encouraged to view these opportunities at the PGA Employment Center at [www.PGA.com](http://www.PGA.com).



### INTRAWEST ADDS MCLAUGHLIN

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Intrawest Golf has added Jim McLaughlin to serve as regional director of operations. McLaughlin, who has been with Intrawest Golf since 1998, will oversee the operation of the firm's four courses in Arizona including two Raven Golf Clubs (Phoenix and Tucson), Trilogy Golf Club (Gilbert), and Santa Rita Golf Club (Corona de Tucson).

### NGF TEAMS WITH ZURICH

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — The Middle Markets business unit of Zurich North America and the National Golf Foundation (NGF) have formed a strategic joint marketing alliance. Zurich North America helps manage risk by offering coverage designed specifically for golf course facilities.

## Summit Golf adds to growing portfolio

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Seizing upon the turmoil in the golf course business, Summit Golf Group has added three new management contracts so far in 2002, bringing its growing portfolio to five courses. The company anticipates having 15 management agreements in place by the end of the year.

"The golf business is struggling and when that happens it benefits good operators like Summit Golf. When times are lean you have to watch costs. Clubs will have to evaluate



The Ted McAnlis-designed Preserve at Tara in Bradenton, Fla., is one of three new courses in Summit Golf's portfolio.

how they run their businesses and that will bode well for us this year," said president Kevin Stark.

To handle the growth, the company has brought in Eric Miko to be the director of operations and has hired Julie Reuse as the director of membership and business development.

Summit Golf specializes in turn around deals, and the three it just signed are no different.

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### Editorial Focus: Hiring

## Experts urge clubs to tackle turnover problems

By DAVID HUBBARD

By 2006, the hospitality industry will need to add 20 million more workers to cover the anticipated growth — the highest projected for all major industries over the next 10 years.

The search for new employees to effectively handle the growth illuminates another issue, how to manage existing employee turnover rates.

Speaking at the National Golf Course Owners Association Conference (NGCOA) in Phoenix in January, human resources specialists, John Sibbald, president of John Sibbald & Associates, an executive search firm based in St. Louis, Mo., and Catherine Gustafson, Ph.D., University of South Carolina, cited the more significant problems and offered a few solutions.

"Reducing turnover is critical as the losses can be enor-

mous and are both tangible and intangible," said Gustafson. "Left unchecked, it can cause the loss of consistency and uniformity in the delivery of a business' products and services, the potential for poor customer service,

### EIGHT WAYS TO LOWER TURNOVER

- Managers should fill in for hourly employees
- Have club sponsored social events for employees
- Promote from within
- Be flexible in scheduling
- Offer orientation programs
- Have structured training programs
- Conduct interviews that are 20 minutes or longer
- Do second interviews before making an offer

lost sales, a lowered perception of managerial effectiveness, as well as the time lost in filling vacant positions."

When the employee turnover rate becomes inordinate to the normal flow of workers in and out of a facility, Sibbald encourages business owners and managers to take a more

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## Intrawest acquires Hawaii's Big Island Country Club

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Intrawest Golf has completed its first acquisition in two years with the purchase of Big Island Country Club in Kaiula-Kona, Hawaii. The deal includes a Pete and Perry Dye designed 18-hole golf course and all developed and undeveloped real estate around the course.

Although the golf and tourism markets have been volatile of late in Hawaii, Intrawest is confident that its acquisition of Big Island Country Club will be successful.

"It has the same season as Arizona where we have a number of courses," said marketing manager Ben Keilholtz. "Once you get to May you depend on local traffic, and I think the

course is well positioned with locals."

Keilholtz said that while tourism numbers are down, the project should pay off in the long-term.

"It is not the best of markets



The 17th hole at Big Island is modeled after Pete Dye's famous 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass.

right now, but it will pick back up," he said. "If we had gone in at the peak of the market, there might have been some concerns. But to get a return on this asset should be a fairly attainable number."

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## GM, superintendent team up to buy LaCita CC

By JOEL JOYNER

TITUSVILLE, Fla. — Owner and club manager Jim Musick and owner and director of grounds Dale Quinn joined forces to make a dream come true last November by purchasing their own private golf facility here at LaCita Country Club.

The two first met in 1991 while working at the Woodlake Country Club in Pinehurst, N.C. "I was the assistant golf professional and Dale was the course superintendent at the time,"

said Musick. "We've been looking for a facility with the right opportunity since 1997. I, personally, have probably looked at over 100 golf courses in Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina."

The course was built in 1984 and designed by Lee Trevino and Ron Garl. The club is about a 40 minute drive west from downtown Orlando and sits just across from Cape Canaveral. The two managing partners knew from the start that they wanted a private facility. "We had made offers on three clubs that were unsuccessful," Musick said. "A friend told me about LaCita when I was working for American Golf over in Jacksonville."



Club owners Dale Quinn, director of agronomy (left), and Jim Musick, club manager, at LaCita Country Club.

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## Employee turnover

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pro-active approach to determine a reasonable and effective turnover rate for their particular operations.

### REDUCING TURNOVER

According to Sibbald and Gustafson, the first step is to differentiate between voluntary and involuntary turnover, and to understand who leaves and why.

"While employees should be regarded as assets rather than expenses, some positions should simply not be regarded as permanent," said Gustafson. "It is often more cost effective to allow employees in easily filled positions to move out or up. As for the truly standout employees, promoting from within allows management to create opportunities which in turn reduce the turnover rate."

Sibbald and Gustafson noted that for the great number of seasonal golf club operations, retaining trained and experienced help is particularly aggravating. They suggested that owners be creative in their incentives and recognition programs to encourage their best employees to return.

Hiring the right person for the job at the onset is, of course, the best means to control the turnover rate. In times of employee shortages, managers pressed for time can easily get a little careless in the selection process. Sibbald and Gustafson reiterated the dangers of "labor crisis management" that involves little more than quick interviews without careful reference checks.

"Simply filling positions with warm bodies can lead to the problems that plague the industry," said Sibbald. "Hired in a crisis mode, new employees are not properly introduced to the company, and usually receive only minimal training, creating the situations that lead to their quitting or being involuntarily dismissed."

They suggested seeking new and perhaps non-traditional sources for new employees such as university programs, internships, the aging workforce, and even welfare to work programs and rehab centers. ■

## Dinosaur Dunes

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can reach up to eight feet high. If you hit your ball into a silage field, it's gone. Our roughs, in some places, reach up to six feet tall."

### MAINTENANCE CHALLENGES

The challenge for Strong and his regulators is that the course is played quite often. "We don't have somebody that manages the course constantly," said Strong. "Members tend to take liberties at times."

For example, there are 20 golf cars on the course owned by individual members. "There are no golf cars provided by the club," Strong explained. "Some golfers will even use John Deere Gators, Quads, ATVs, or - when it is really cold - some will even drive their truck out on the course."

"The constant play makes redesign, maintenance of fairways, changing of tee boxes and everything a real challenge," he continued. "We can't really shut the course down to maintain it or make changes."

The main five regulators - the big helpers - include: Jerry "Big Daddy" Kirchoff, Ron German, Joe Heath, Larry "Swede" Fagerquist, and Paul Parker. Other regulators include: Jim Davis, David Kuhlman, Steve and Melva Barnett, Nikki Hemel, Bev Kirkoff, and Richard and Teresa Hemel. ■

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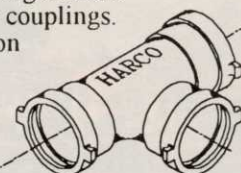
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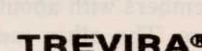
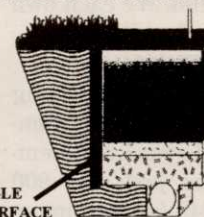
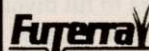
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