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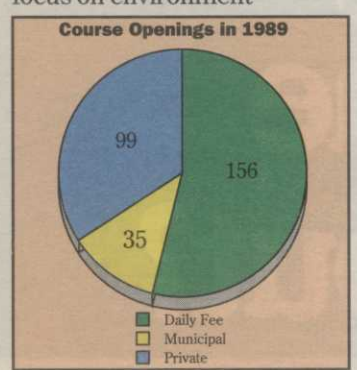
# GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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## Ariz. law threatens growth

BY PETER BLAIS  
Arizona is moving ahead with water conservation plans that include limiting the size of most new, 18-hole golf courses to 90 acres within the water management districts. The Phoenix area, because of its higher temperatures and lower rainfall, is restricted to 120 acres.

Opponents argue that the new laws will hurt tourism, the state's second-largest industry, since smaller courses are generally more difficult to play. That will discourage high handicappers, who make up the bulk

of tourist golfers, from visiting the state.

"Normally as a rule of thumb they figure on 130 acres for an 18-hole course. . . I'm sure that 90 acres is going to be very tight," said Donald Rossi, executive director of the Golf Course Builders of America, who believes that environmental concerns could do more to slow the current nationwide golf boom than any other issue.

"They (state of Arizona) have a water problem and they're trying to do something about it. Water is going to be a big problem, not only in Arizona, but all over the country

in another year or two," Rossi said.

Arizona Department of Water Resources Director Bill Plummer signed orders Dec. 5 that provide specific management plans for the Tucson, Phoenix, Prescott and Pinal County active management areas. The department followed that in late December with 10,000 letters to water rights holders informing them of the new requirements.

The law, which was originally adopted in 1986, affects any course where construction started that year. Its aim is to reduce water

*Continued on page 16*

## 1st course planned for handicapped

BY MARK LESLIE  
An Ohio rehabilitation hospital plans to build the first golf facility for the handicapped in a project that could have far-reaching effects on golf courses nationwide.

Lessons learned from the technologies and designs used at the course at Edwin Shaw Hospital in Akron may usher in a new era, especially for municipal courses that must abide by laws making public facilities accessible to the handicapped.

The project of the hospital's Development Foundation has drawn support and it promises to provide challenges for all involved, from the design work (donated by Hurdzan Design Group of Columbus, Ohio) to the construction (some part of which is a gift of Wadsworth Construction Co. of Plainfield, Ill.) and finances (which include donations from the World Series of Golf, Wilson Sporting Goods and MacGregor Golf).

The hospital's vice president for development, Linda Cinson, said officials will soon decide exactly what type of facility to add to its current small driving range and two practice greens. They are leaning toward initially building a large driving range and three holes. Another six holes could follow later.

They hope to get construction started by this fall, probably building the driving range first so that it can be used even before year's end.

*Continued on page 29*



Photo courtesy of Nelson & Wright  
Officials hope West Loch Golf Course has sextupled in value before evening opening.

## Lease one, build two

BY MARK LESLIE  
Honolulu could earn a quick \$100 million if investors bid on a proposed lease for the just-completed municipal West Loch Golf Course in Ewa.

Mayor Frank Fasi, for years Hawaii's leading critic of foreign investment, has proposed what may be an unprecedented build-lease arrangement. He hopes to lease or sell the course and clubhouse, which cost the city \$20 million to build, for \$100 million or more and use the profits to build two golf courses plus af-

fordable housing.

The West Loch project sailed through the permit process while private ventures in Honolulu remain mired in the bureaucratic red tape. Officials feel potential developers may be willing to pay the large lease fee rather than tie up funds in the lengthy permit process.

The surprise is that "no one has said that's (amount of money) out of line. Everybody I hear is saying, 'That's reasonable,'" said Dave Mills, administrator for

*Continued on page 18*

## Environment the major concern of architects

BY MARK LESLIE  
Environmental issues running the gamut from wetlands to pesticide use are the most important problems facing golf course architects, according to a Golf Course News survey of the nation's leading architects.

Of the 55 architects who responded to the question of what is the most important issue

they face, 37 listed a topic concerning the environment.

Several other issues received from one to seven mentions from architects, including the cost of construction and maintenance; water usage; keeping design natural; financing; obtaining permits; finding qualified help; the speed of play; the distance golfers are

hitting the ball; the speed of the greens; and the influence of the professional tour on standards of maintenance.

The overwhelming response that environment was the major concern came from every region of the United States.

Denis Griffiths of Braselton, Ga., decried

*Continued on page 26*

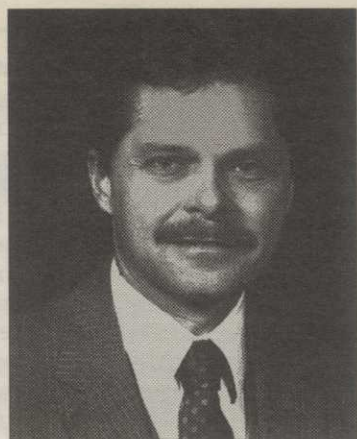


## Stuart named vice-president at Ransomes

Thomas Stuart has been appointed vice president of engineering for Ransomes Inc., in Johnson Creek, Wis., according to president Helmut Adam.

"Ransomes' continued rapid growth and expansion into the golf/turf market as well as the addition of the turfrenovation product line created the need for this management expertise," Adam said.

Stuart previously was vice president of engineering for Blackhawk Automotive, a division of Applied Power of Milwaukee, Wis.



Thomas Stuart

a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and master's in engineering management from Milwaukee School of Engineering.

## Opperman sales rep at Williamson

Fred D. Opperman, past president of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents, has joined Williamson Nursery and Associates, Inc. of Huntley, Ill., as horticultural sales representative.

Opperman has worked in golf course management for more than

25 years, and was superintendent at Glen Oak Country Club in Glen Ellyn, Ill., for 19 years.

He has been editor of "The Bull Sheet," the monthly newspaper of the MAGCS, for six years.

A graduate of Pennsylvania State University, Opperman is a certi-

fied golf course superintendent. He will be responsible for the sale of nursery stock, transplanting services, and various fertilizer products to golf courses, park and school districts, and municipalities.

## Ranks moves from Penobly to VA-JO-WA GC

Dave Ranks, superintendent at Penobscot Valley Country Club in Orono, Maine, for four years, has taken the superintendent's reins at VA-JO-WA Golf Club in Island Falls, Maine.

Ranks is a former superintendent at Wawenock Country Club

in Walpole, Maine, and assistant superintendent at Waterville (Maine) Country Club and Natanis Golf Course in Augusta, Maine.

At VA-JO-WA he said he doesn't plan major cosmetic changes, "just gradual improvements that will improve playing conditions for all

players. Our goal is to make VA-JO-WA one of the top courses in the state."

Ranks is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts' Stockbridge School of Agriculture, where he concentrated on agronomy and turfgrass science.

## Handicapped

Continued from page 1

### The obstacles

Most golf courses present major accessibility problems for handicapped golfers, whether they are wheelchair-bound or disabled in other ways.

"Until there is a way that we can get those (golf) cars around and get them on the greens and tees, people who have to ride in them and can not get out of them are going to have a real problem getting on real golf courses," said Peter Longo, an expert on handicapped golfing and member of Edwin Shaw's advisory committee on the project. "Until we can somehow get around that problem ... then the mass of people who are wheelchair-bound will not be able to actually play the game like everybody else can because they can't get on the greens and sandtraps..."

"People who can get around on crutches can play the game. But until we can get wheelchairs up there, the others can't."

"The No. 1 problem is accessibility," agreed Bob Wilson, executive director of the National Amputee Golf Association. "In California, for instance, handicapped parking is required by law at municipal courses; yet what good does that do if the courses themselves aren't accessible?"

"Right now the numbers of golfers in wheelchairs are few, but in the next 10 years there are going to be a lot," Wilson said, referring to the PGA-written "First Swing" clinics that are being taught to the handicapped nationwide.

By 1995 there's going to be a big demand for accessibility, Wilson said, adding: "The handicapped are the worst organized minority in the country. If they do get organized, the demand will intensify because there will be somebody out there screaming."

"And the 'munis' (municipal courses) especially will feel it because it's (accessibility) required by law and because the handicapped are supporting the courses through their taxes."

Getting onto tees and greens is the biggest obstacle for handicapped golfers, Wilson said.

Architect Barry Serafin of Hurdzan Design said accessibility

Continued on page 30

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## Handicapped

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problems will be overcome by:

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- Access areas like ramps onto the greens and tees.
- Honey-combed grate-type structures installed in the turf to prevent grass from being worn down by wheelchairs and golf cars.
- Flat sand traps.
- And, possibly, an artificial turf such as Mod-Sod on the tees and greens.

Recent advances in technology — from the grate-type structures to the Modified Distance golf ball to customized golf cars and wheelchairs — could have a major impact on the Edwin Shaw Hospital facility and others of its type in the future.

Cinson added that once the hospital's new golf facility opens — perhaps as early as next year — it could serve as a testing ground for similar facilities elsewhere.

"We are a rehabilitation hospital. Our recreational therapists are working on this program," she said. "We could conduct workshops for therapists in other parts of the country. We could let people from other regions of the country come here."

"We have run three series of golf classes with 10 to 12 people in each... so we have some experience in teaching."

Wilson, who has been involved in the Edwin Shaw project, said the golf cart or wheelchair first has to be able to get to the tee, and then the putting greens.

He suggested that the growing number of golf courses with bentgrass fairways maintain

their regular greens for the non-handicapped, and add a second green somewhere on the fairway for the handicapped.

"If you've got bentgrass fairways, just cut the secondary green 'low enough even to putt on,'" he said.

"With this idea, you have access to that green by the wheelchair and you don't have to worry about Mod-Sod or other artificial grass," Wilson said. Otherwise, he disagrees with those who believe real grass greens can hold up to the wear and tear of wheelchairs.

One supporter of natural grass is Tom McKinney, the golf pro at Fox Den Golf Course in Stowe, Ohio, who has worked extensively teaching handicapped golfers and has donated his time and expertise to the Edwin Shaw project.

"The only handicapped people who would

put a strain on greens would be wheelchair people. What percentage are in wheelchairs? In our classes only about 2 to 3 percent." That, he said, would not be enough to damage a green.

But Wilson said: "If you play judiciously you're not going to ruin the green with a wheelchair. If you push the chair in a direct line it probably won't hurt it unless the ground is wet. But if you go to the left or right it will tear up the green. And if you pull the wheelchair back it will tear it up."

Of Edwin Shaw's current two practice greens, one is natural and the other is Mod-Sod — and Cinson said officials will decide which type of green to use on the new course after testing the two with wheelchairs this spring.

So artificial turf on tees and greens remains open for debate, but other factors find agreement from the circle of people who support the facility.

### Therapy

First and foremost, therapists see golf as physically and mentally important to the handicapped.

"Physically, it gives them something to do," McKinney said. "Some can swing with only one arm. Some can't pick up their own ball but they can hit it. Some who thought they could never play again, find that they can."

"Mentally, some have nothing they can do otherwise, and that's part of the rehabilitation, for sure."

Cinson said, "Getting out helps their self-confidence, gets them to set goals..."

She said the hospital "recognized that constructive leisure activities, such as golf ... enhance an individual's sense of self-worth and self-sufficiency and are vital elements in rebuilding lives."

"The idea for the golf program developed as a result of our dismay over the limited recreational facilities and opportunities available to the disabled," she said. She added that the hospital at first had no idea its facility would be the first in the country for the handicapped.

"We decided to expand our recreational therapy facilities and since Edwin Shaw is located on 100 wooded acres, we decided to 'dream big' and develop the country's first total golf program for the disabled."

Twelve percent of Summit County's population consists of people with physical disabilities from strokes, spinal cord injuries, amputations, birth defects, arthritis, blindness and a variety of other problems caused by accidents and disease, Cinson said.

The "total" program includes the new driving range, golf holes, two practice greens, indoor practice facilities, and instructional classes using PGA pro Longo's "Challenge Golf" program.

Cinson said the hospital wants to provide a supportive atmosphere to allow players to build their skills and move on to a regular course; provide a place for the handicapped to meet, find new friends and develop a league; and develop a staff with the expertise to deal with disabilities and fit special golf clubs.

Access is the only facet of Serafin's design that gives a clue the course will serve as a learning facility for the handicapped.

Although the land is flat, he said, "We will try to make it easy on them if possible but yet again we don't want it designed particularly for the handicapped because they don't perceive themselves as being handicapped. So you want to try to make the golf course as regular as possible."

McKinney added: "We want to try to build a nice course ... one that's easier to get around on, but not easier to play. Remember, many of these folks have non-handicapped friends they want to play with."

Besides, McKinney feels that "income-wise

Continued on page 31

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# Cars CAN be modified for special handicaps

Golf cars are not designed to fill the needs of the physically challenged.

Yet, as National Amputee Golf Association Executive Director Bob Wilson said: "When you start getting into the question of wheelchairs you really open up a can of worms. Unless a person can get out of the car and into a chair unassisted, you've got problems."

Now a number of golfers are finding an alternative — having a golf car customized to fit their particular handicaps.

Probably the first handicapped golfer to have a golf car customized was Dennis Walters, who was on the verge of joining the PGA Qualifying Tour in 1974 when a fluke accident rendered him paralyzed from the waist down.

After the accident, Walters customized a car "by trial and error," and it has been his ticket onto the course ever since.

In fact, each year he gives dozens of trick-shot exhibitions from his car. The vehicle sports a seat that swings out to the side 90 degrees, allowing him to make his shot and swing back into the car.

"I have blueprints and if anybody writes in, I send them the blueprints," he said.

## Handicapped

*Continued from page 30*

and expense-wise" the hospital could never operate a course just for the handicapped.

Asked if Edwin Shaw's pioneering program is a breakthrough for handicapped golfers, Wilson said: "It's got to start some place... Possibly once it hits the papers and gets publicized enough, the next logical step is that other people say, 'Hey, we're doing this (training) in a gymnasium with whiffle balls; we've got 150 acres out here that nobody's using for anything; why don't we put in a golf course?'"

As for Edwin Shaw Hospital's part, Cinson said: "Our planning committee is really ready to go. We're anxious..."



Dennis Walters tees off from his specially designed golf car during one of his many demonstrations.

"Machine shops can make the alterations easily."

"There are a lot of people all over this country who didn't think it was possible they could ever play golf," Walters said. "At least now people know they have the option. It is possible now."

Walters said that at each of the 82 shows where he performed last year "there were people in wheelchairs. Now they're aware it's possible. When they know that, they'll want to do it."

# Special training said making major impact

## Longo, Carbin videotapes open frontiers to challenged

Handicapped people, who a few years ago had little hope of playing golf, may soon have a major impact on golf courses around the country.

From Dennis Walter's public exhibitions to Peter Longo's "Challenge Golf" video and Kathy Corbin's "Never Say Never" video and program, the handicapped are being taught golf. They are finding that the game is not the impossibility they had thought, but rather can be an important part of their rehabilitation.

The National Amputee Golf Association, based in Amherst, N.H., has high expectations for the First Swing program which was developed by the Professional Golf Foundation's Junior Golf Foundation as an instructional booklet.

Last year NAGA Executive Director Bob Wilson taught eight First Swing seminars, and this year he already has 16 scheduled. One that he held at Grand Junction Veterans Administration Medical Center in Colorado in February attracted 130 participants, including more than 90 in wheelchairs.

"The main thrust of our First Swing program is to provide physical recreation thera-

pists with the basics of the golf swing so that they can use that as a form of rehabilitation," Wilson said. "If you wanted to look at the amputee population, it's probably skewed pretty much to the elderly from the standpoint that most of them suffer amputations because of diabetes. It doesn't matter if you're 4 or 104, the first swing is still your first swing."

"I imagine that if you're talking about 60- to 70-year-olds, they were golfers when they had all their parts. By using golf as a rehab vehicle, the idea is to show them that they can still play this game even though they're missing a part, and to get them out there playing again."

Wilson said he will conduct a First Swing seminar and clinic at any hospital that would like to host one, not just VA facilities, many of which have golf courses.

"Until Kathy Corbin and Peter Longo came along there was nothing (for the physically challenged)," Wilson said, adding that "Never Say Never" and "Challenge Golf" have had a major impact.

Wilson expects a growth spurt in handicapped golfers in the next few years because of First Swing and other clinics for the handicapped. "And they've all got buddies, too," he said. "By 1995 there's going to be a big demand" for golf courses to be accessible to the handicapped.

## LPGA pro's plans for 18-holer in works

While Edwin Shaw Hospital proceeds with its plans for a golf facility for the handicapped, Ladies Professional Golf Association teaching pro Shirley Hicks is close on its tail with a plan to build a full handicapped-accessible 18-hole golf course.

Hicks, a nurse who recently retired from the U.S. Navy and is living in Dublin, Calif., has her sights on a parcel of land in Barryville, Ark. She says the project is basically being slowed by indecisiveness of the landowner. She wants to buy 120 acres; he wants to sell 90.

Hicks said she is hoping for a quick resolu-

tion because she wants to begin work on at least a couple of holes soon.

She has not decided who will build the course.

She said Merrill-Lynch in Little Rock, Ark., and Kodak have expressed interest in helping fund the project, but have not committed themselves.

"We probably will know (the project's status) within the next six months," Hicks said. "The package is being revised and rewritten, and there are a lot of politics involved."

Hicks consulted Bob Wilson, executive

director of the National Amputee Golf Association, and Dr. Alice Martinson, among others.

"One of our biggest problems is to find a kind of material to put on the greens so we can put wheelchairs on them. Another is to make the course difficult enough so that it will be a challenge, but not too difficult so that it will impair anyone's ability to play it," Hicks said.

She said southwest Arkansas is considered the third most desirable part of the country for retirees, taking into consideration weather, land costs and other factors.

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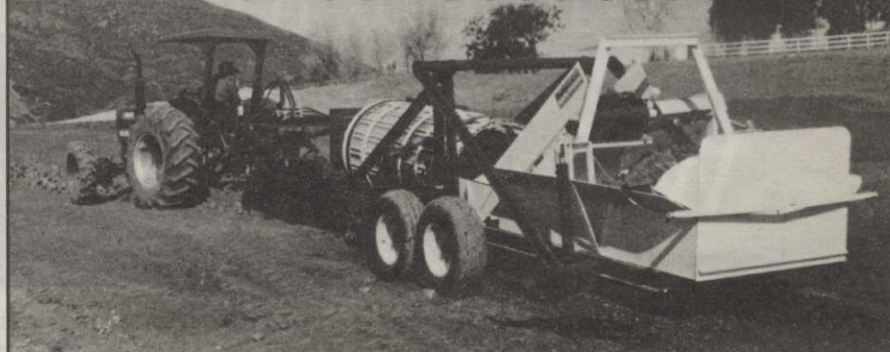
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