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GOLF COURSE NEWS

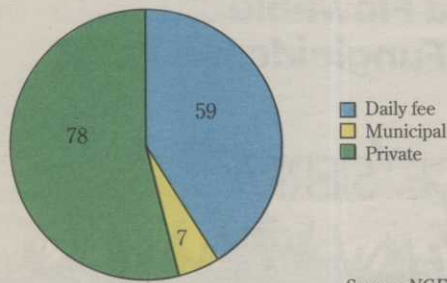
THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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INSIDE

- 17 MORE PRESSURE** to top-dress
- 18 WAKE-UP** call sounded at roundtable
- 19 SPECIES-FINDERS** endanger projects

Type of real estate courses opened in 1989



News

- McLoughlin drafting rules for Turkey4
- Pennsylvanians oppose park developments ..4
- Foxboro CC members pitch in to save5
- Moratorium on courses asked in BC5
- Course would buffer hospital, homes5
- Marriott opens management division6
- New site eyed for controversial SIU course ..6
- Herbert F. Bunton of Bunton Co. dies9

Departments

- Comment**
- Cynics on both sides should join hands.....8
- Letters**
- Tribute to designers worthwhile.....9
- Super Focus**
- Competence, not gender, Knaggs' agenda.....10
- New Courses**
- Jack Nicklaus II designing first course.....11
- Government Update**
- NCA asks Treasury Dept. to ax proposals.....12-13
- Association News**
- Zoller honored as 'Renaissance man'.....14-15
- On the Move**
- Soh at helm of Kubota Tractor Corp.....23
- Equipment News**
- Melex buys assets of N.C. distributor.....24
- New Literature**
- GCA publishes course accounting system.....49
- New Products**
- New equipment hits the marketplace.....26
- On the Green**
- Indy 500 no treat for Charlie Thompson.....30

Big names, big time in big way

IGM has megaplan for 'ultra-courses'

BY MARK LESLIE
Earth is expected to be moved by 1991 on the first of a dozen "ultra-prestige" golf courses that will usher into the United States the concept of marketable memberships.

"I'm enthusiastic right now. We're moving well," said John T. Killip, the man

hired to steer International Golf Management, Inc. through the challenges of building the multiple-course network of "premier" facilities called The Partners Clubs. The exclusive, non-discriminatory private clubs are intended to answer the need of business executives, providing "luxurious and exclusive settings for social, recreational and business."

Killip, IGM's senior vice president, has been busy recruiting big names, going

big time in a big way. And now he sees the fruits ripening on the vine as he prepares to "get the common stock, private placement memorandum on the street at the end of May or first of June."

The first round of 1,200 shares of preferred stock should be issued between January and June 1991, Killip said. IGM will eventually sell 4,800 memberships for the first 12 courses, equivalent to 400

Continued on page 20

Bardmoor changes planned

BY PETER BLAIS
The Tampa businessman who purchased Bardmoor Country Club in Largo, Fla., March 30 plans to open one of the courses to the public and finish the last nine holes of a private, Tom Fazio-designed layout.

Rand Gentry, 45, converted the Bardmoor North Golf Course, for many years the

Continued on page 11



The picturesque 4th hole at The Bayou Club will become the 16th hole in the new layout. See page 11 for more details and news on other courses. Photo courtesy of Fazio Golf Course Design

Hawaii lease brings \$111M

BY PETER BLAIS
A Japanese company has bid \$111 million to lease Honolulu's recently completed, city-owned West Loch Golf Course in Ewa.

However, the city council, which was scheduled to decide in late April whether to accept Jurigi Co. Ltd.'s bid, could nix the deal, even though the \$91 million profit (the course and clubhouse cost the city \$20 million) would be used to build two new municipal courses and affordable housing.

Several councilors believe the lease arrangement may be illegal since the land was originally condemned to be used as a municipal golf course, not leased

to a private course operator, said city Finance Director Ted Jung.

"There is some public sentiment against the lease. Some people want a municipal course right away. You know, a bird in the hand..." said Deputy Director of Housing Ron Mun. He also noted that the lease arrangement requires 150 rounds a day to be reserved for residents for two years, at a cost of \$27 a round, while the two new municipal courses are built.

Just prior to the March 15 deadline for submitting bids, opposition councilors issued a news release questioning the legality of the lease arrangement, according to Rom Duran, assistant to the city's

Continued on page 12

Sharpener breaks time barrier

BY PETER BLAIS
Fledgling Bell Turf Equipment Manufacturing has developed a reel sharpener company officials say will do the job in one-sixth the time at less than half the price.

The San Jose, Calif. firm is being wooed with joint manufacturing proposals from several large companies for Reel Mate, a test unit the company's founder believes will be eagerly sought after by superintendents once it goes into production.

"There's been a lot of interest," said company President Pete Bell, 30, a former golf course mechanic.

The major appeal of Bell's gang mower

sharpener is time savings. Competitive grinders, Bell said, require two to three days for the mechanic to disassemble his mower, mount the reels onto the grinder, then re-assemble the mowing unit once the job is done.

The Reel Mate, which weighs 27 pounds compared to the 800 pounds of most grinders, attaches permanently to the tractor and sharpens the reels in about four hours.

It also requires far less monitoring. A mechanic must adjust a manual grinder every three or four minutes, said Bell. The Reel Mate's micro-processor allows the mechanic to program the job and then

Continued on page 13

2nd woman, 1st Oriental join ASGCA

BY MARK LESLIE

"I am ecstatic," said Jan Beljan, reacting to being just the second woman ever elected to the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

Nai Chung "Lee" Chang, the society's first Oriental member, and former Jack Nicklaus senior designer Bob Cupp joined Beljan among the eight architects elected as associate members March 28 at the group's annual meeting in California.

Others joining the exclusive association, which now numbers 108, are Keith Foster, from Arthur Hills' Arizona office; Tom Marzolf, a colleague of Beljan in Tom Fazio's North Carolina office; W. Bruce Matthews III from Gerald Matthews' firm in Lansing, Mich.; Mark A. Mungeam of Cornish & Silva in Andover, Mass.; and Tom Pearson of Golden Bear International in North Palm Beach, Fla.

"I'm thrilled to get in," said Chang, 43, a China native who has been living in the United States for 20 years. "This is important in my personal development. I've been looking to

Continued on page 22

Sherman Hollow outlook 'optimistic'

BY PETER BLAIS

Sherman Hollow (Vt.) developers have finished presenting their case for a new golf course to local government officials and are "optimistic" they will receive a building permit for the controversial facility by mid- to late-summer, according to principal Paul Truax.

Expert witnesses for the developers of the Huntington, Vt., project concluded their testimony before the District 4 Environmental Commission in March.

Opponents, concerned about logging activities and pesticide contamination of ground water, began testifying April 9. Additional

public hearings were scheduled April 23 and May 29, said Truax.

"The absolute earliest we'd get a permit would be July. But August or September are more likely," said Truax, who has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars over the past five years while navigating his \$22-million project through the Vermont regulatory waters.

"I think we've done more than any course in the country to show we have an environmentally safe golf course. Our witnesses have been good. The opposition found no major holes. We've satisfied all the state agencies. We even have a letter from a water quality agency

praising us for being overly conservative in our approach. I'm optimistic we'll get the permit soon," he said.

The timing of the permit is important. If it comes in July, Truax believes he could begin clearing and grading operations this summer and have the course ready for play in 1992. If it comes later, weather and state law forbidding clearing after a certain date could delay the opening another year.

"We'll do as much as the weather and state permit," said Truax.

Truax believes Act 250, Vermont's main development-control law that opponents have used

to delay the project, needs change.

"Five years is obviously too long to get something like this approved," said Truax. "The Act 250 process needs revision to prevent what's happened to us from happening again.

"A lot of what's been decided here should have been decided at the state rather than the district level. You have the expertise at state agencies. It's mind-boggling that a layperson on a local board can listen to opposing expert witnesses, both with years and years of experience in a particular discipline, and make an informed decision."

Sharpener

Continued from page 1
work on something else for the next 20 minutes while an individual reel is sharpened.

"It can save a mechanic an immense amount of time," said Bell.

And money.

Competitive grinders sell for up to \$12,000, said Bell. The ReelMate will list for \$5,000.

Bell's knowledge springs from practical experience.

The son of an engineer, he serviced golf cars for a year after attending San Jose's Cupertino High School. He spent the next five years as a mechanic at Almaden Golf & Country Club in San Jose, followed by another five at La Rinconada Country Club in Los Gatos.

"I just wasn't making enough money to live in the Silicon Valley, make house payments and bring up four kids," he explained of his decision to open his own business last June.

Bell financed his company with a \$10,000 loan from an uncle and a second mortgage on his own home. Working with his older brother, Tab, who owns a small welding and fabrication company, they began production last August of Bell Turf Equipment's first product, Mower Mate.

The utility trailer for walk-behind, greens mowers, clamps the mower securely in place "so it can't be thrown out of adjustment, no matter how hard the driver drives" from green to green, said Bell.

The trailer allows the mower to be loaded and unloaded without lifting and to be serviced and cleaned while on the trailer.

The 60-pound Mower Mate, which can be customized to the specifications and colors of individual mower companies, was on display at February's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America annual show in Orlando, Fla.

Bell received 145 orders the month following the show and has sold 600 units so far to companies like John Deere, Toro, Jacobsen and Bunton.

Pete plans to buy his brother's manufacturing company in the next few months, retaining the company's five employees and his brother as production manager.

Tab, who opened his company in 1978, and Pete, who has been in the golf course equipment-user end a dozen years, "combine to give our company user and manufacturing knowledge," said Pete.

Although he still has many superintendent and mechanic contacts at San Jose-area courses, Pete Bell said he has considered working part time as a mechanic to keep the creative juices flowing.

"Ideas just seem to click while you're out there turning a wrench," he said.

But Bell said he should be able to put off moonlighting for the next several years since he has "six more ideas on the drawing board."

"We don't want to make me-too products. There are a lot of companies out there doing that. We want to develop our own products, create our own niche. We've got some pretty big goals," he said.

At Prestbury, both the owner and superintendent are impressed with our equipment

Dave Meyer is both. After 20 years of working as a superintendent at another Chicago area resort, Meyer and a partner jumped to the ownership side when they bought Prestbury Golf Club in 1988.

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