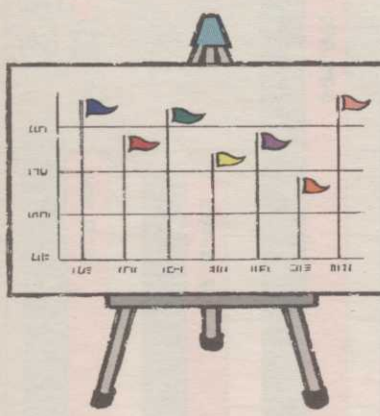
BRIEFS



PALMER TAKES OVER AT STARR PASS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management Company assumed management of Starr Pass Golf Course in Tucson on June 1, according to Robert Holzman, APGMC chief executive officer. The agreement was signed with Starr Pass Development Corporation. Starr Pass is an 18-hole course designed by Robert Cupp of Golforce.

In other news, APGMC was appointed receiver for Hidden Hills Country Club on May 1, by the Circuit Court of Duval County, Jacksonville, Fla. Hidden Hills, a private 18-hole facility located in Jacksonville, had been remodeled by APMGC's sister firm, Palmer Course Design Company of Ponte Vedra.

J.C. RESORTS TO MANAGE MT. WOODSON

LAJOLLA, Calif. — The LaJolla-based JC Resorts company has been named by Davidson Communities of San Diego to provide management services for Davidson's Mt. Woodson Country Club in North San Diego County. With the 18-hole Mt. Woodson track and the 18-hole Twin Oaks course in San Marcos scheduled to open in December, 1992, JC Resorts will own and/or operate 108 holes of golf in Southern California, including the 45 holes at the Rancho Bernardo Inn of San Diego, and the 27 holes at the Temecula Creek Inn, Temecula. All of the above courses are daily fee.

CUNNINGHAM JOINS DEERING BAY

MIAMI — Cindy Cunningham has been named membership director of Deering Bay Yacht and Country Club, a new residential and recreational community on Biscayne Bay. Cunningham brings to her position 11 years of experience in real estate and business development. Most recently she functioned as real estate manager of the Tribune Company in Chicago; then as manager of its Eastern Division in Fort Lauderdale. Deering Bay is located directly on Biscayne Bay and features an Arnold Palmer-designed golf course.

IRWIN MANAGING DEER LAKE

Deer Lake Golf Club, located in Springfield, Mo., is the newest facility to be managed by Hale Irwin Golf Services, Inc. Nestled in the Ozark's rolling hills, Deer Lake features a picturesque golf course and several executive conference rooms designed for seminars and private gatherings. Hale Irwin Golf Services is an international golf course design, development and management company based in St. Louis, Mo.

Fledgling club association wins fight against taxation

By HAL PHILLIPS

HARTFORD, Conn. — Two years ago, representatives of several Connecticut golf clubs kicked around the idea of forming a statewide organization. But for one reason or another, the time wasn't right.

In 1991, the recession-wracked state passed a six-percent sales tax on sports and recreational clubs dues. That encumbrance was levied on top of the existing 10 percent excise tax already paid by such clubs — making the effective state tax a whopping 16 percent.

Suddenly, Connecticut club owners and managers had all the incentive they needed.

The Connecticut Club Association was born early in 1992, having filed a certificate of incorporation in February. Five months later, the six percent tack-on tax was repealed.

"We really didn't get off the ground that first year," recalls CCA President Paul Mersereau, who also serves as president at Hartford Golf Club. "Then the six

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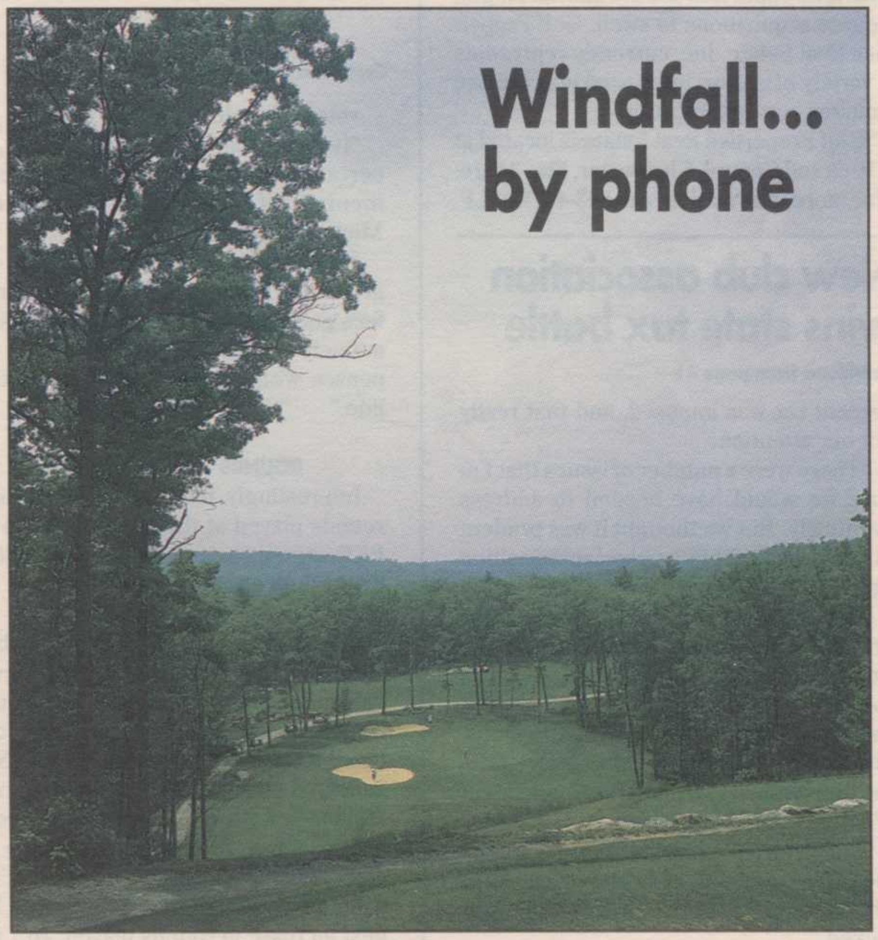
Windfall... by phone



The par-3 11th hole at Shaker Hills Golf Club in Harvard, Mass.

Automatic tee time reservation systems a boon for club managers, not just players

By HAL PHILLIPS

When automated tee-time reservation systems burst on the scene a few years ago, many industry observers viewed the development as a convenience exclusive to players... and why not? The ease of 24-hour reservations by credit card, no more busy signals while phoning the pro shop, and prime tee times for those who plan ahead.

However, automated reservation systems are beginning to prove their worth on the management side, as well. There are drawbacks, but daily fee club managers and golf directors recognize the advantages of arranging their tee schedules by computer, by phone.

"When I first came on in April of 1991 and talked to the owner, we thought it would be a great service to the golfer — and it is," said Peter Dupuis, director of golf at Shaker Hills Golf Club in Harvard, Mass. "But as it turns out, it's been a tremendous convenience for me and my staff."

'As it turns out, it's been a tremendous convenience for me and my staff.'
— Peter Dupuis
Shaker Hills GC

Shaker Hills, an upscale daily-fee operation, has used Xeta Reservation Systems Inc. since the course opened in July 1991. The Tulsa-based firm currently serves 65 courses in 12 states, and Dupuis is happy with the results.

"Plain and simple, it takes the place of some staff," Dupuis explained. "There's no comparison. It frees up time for personal attention in the pro shop."

In a survey of its 39 clients nationwide, another manufacturer of automated tee-time software — Fairway Systems of Englewood, Colo. — found the computer reservation service decreased calls to the pro shop by 15 percent.

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Hinckley assumes helm of newly reorganized Club Resorts

DALLAS — Things have changed at Club Resorts Inc., the hospitality division of ClubCorp that operates Pinehurst Resort and Country Club, among others.

James M. Hinkley has been named president and the company has reformulated its growth strategy to include aggressive pursuit of management contracts, international projects and development of a new membership product.

Hinckley is a 23-year veteran of Club Corporation International (ClubCorp), the parent company of Club Resorts. He has served in numerous capacities within ClubCorp, including overseeing all operations, new club development and new business development of Club Resorts' sister company, Club Corporation of America.

Hinckley is also director of overseas operations for GolfCorp — the public-golf arm of ClubCorp — and ClubCorp Realty, a real estate development subsidiary.

"Jim has solid dealmaking, hospitality and private club experience, which is the perfect mix to lead Club Resorts into its new endeavors," said Robert H. Hedman, ClubCorp chairman.

Just what are those "endeavors"? Namely, placing less emphasis on turning around poorly managed clubs.

When established in the mid-1980s, Club Resorts focused on growth through acquiring troubled properties that displayed strong turn-around potential. Yet during the past year — by building off its success in operating Palmas Del Mar Resort (Humacao, Puerto Rico) and Barton Creek (Austin, Texas) — the company has refocused its efforts to include manage-

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AGC deals with lease problems in Oceanside

OCEANSIDE, Calif. — Residents and city officials in cash-strapped Oceanside continue to seek changes in their existing lease with American Golf Corp., which operates Oceanside Municipal Golf Course. AGC is looking to change the lease, as well.

The Oceanside City Council, which has been negotiating alterations in the lease for more than a year, is looking for fee increases and a higher percentage of revenue sent the city's way.

Under the current agreement, which expires in 2002, the city of 135,000 receives 12 percent of gross revenues from the course. AGC netted $782,000 in 1991, while Oceanside received less than $200,000.

Yet, AGC isn't particularly happy with the lease either. "We are looking for some fee increases, " said Gail Goodrich, AGC vice president. "We haven't had any fee increases in four years."

Tee times

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"The rush of calls we had when we opened the tee time window, if you will, has dropped off considerably," said Reed Pryor, golf administrator for the12 courses operated by the Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation. "Overall, the staff has more time to concentrate on sales in the pro shop, or what have you. The system is working very, very well."

Handling tee times by phone does require an adjustment, and the process is not without its potentially negative developments. For example, Pryor said some of his pros felt the new system meant a certain loss of control — particularly with regard to twilight leagues.

Furthermore, Fairway System clients — Pryor among them — reported a six percent drop in food & beverage sales. This makes sense: Players with reserved tee times don't put their names on a list and sit in the bar for 90 minutes.

"Nobody can deny the potential for that is there," said Pryor. "But I think so many people are conscious of their time nowadays, milling about the pro shop and having a few hot dogs isn't what they want to do."

To compensate for no-shows, most courses with computer reservation systems require golfers to arrive 30 to 40 minutes in advance. In theory, this leaves time for a quick morsel and libation. Besides, Dupuis believes, "food & beverage sales are more a function of atmosphere than hanging around waiting for a tee time."

On the other hand, two Xeta customers have found the system has cleaned out the clubhouse, which has bolstered F&B business. "People used to see big crowds at the turn, and they wouldn't go in the clubhouse," said Xeta's Gary Crews.

For the golf course owner, the question of automated reservation systems is more black and white: Computerized tee times appear to be money-makers.

The Fairway Systems survey reported net income increases of $12,500 at its 39 member courses. Xeta reports similar numbers.

Both firms indicated that nearly all client courses issue a reservation card with an annual fee of $10 to $50; or they charge a reservation fee of $.50 to $4 per golfer per tee time. Multiply that by the number of rounds handled by computer and you've created significant new income.

Shaker Hills, for one, does not charge a fee, while the 12 Indianapolis courses on Pryor's watch have incorporated a reservation charge into greens fees.

"We're all new at this, and so are the golfers," explained Pryor. "So we're all learning and changing things as we go along. But from what I've seen, the pros outweigh the cons."

New NGCOA chapter in Florida

The Central Florida Chapter of the National Golf Course Owners Association was formed May 18 by owners and operators of golf courses in and around the Orlando area.

Bill Stine, the owner and operator of Kissimmee Bay Golf Course, was elected president.

Stine said the chapter's mission is "to organize the owners into an industrial force in the central Florida area. We want to work towards solving mutual problems and promoting the game of golf in our state."

He said the chapter is looking forward to a close relationship with the national association in which all could benefit from the knowledge and expertise of owners from across the nation.

Hinckley to run Club Resorts

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ment of properties which are owned by fiscally sound establishments.

"Club Resorts is uniquely positioned in the marketplace," said Hinckley, "because we are the only hospitality company that offers proven experience in all the companies — hotel, recreation, real estate and club operations — needed to effectively manage a resort.

"In fact, the demand is so high for quality resort management that in just the past few months, our focused efforts have produced numerous opportunities for us."

Club Resorts is also targeting international expansion by dovetailing off ClubCorp's decade of involvement and recent joint ventures in Europe and Asia.

Further, according to Hinckley, Club Resorts is only months away from unveiling its newest product: a hybrid of club membership and second-home options.