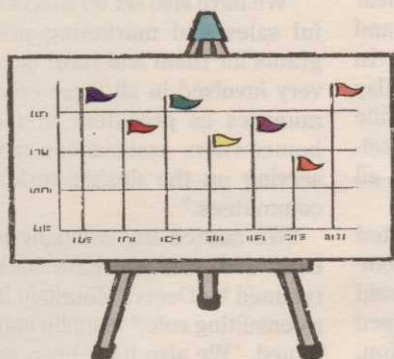


BRIEFS



CRI TABS CRONKHITE

ROCKVILLE, Md. — CRI Golf has named J. Kent Cronkhite vice president in charge of operations.



J. Kent Cronkhite

He assumes responsibility for all CRI Golf's on-site management activities.

CRI Golf offers a full range of services including acquisitions of golf courses and country clubs, property/management, asset management and advisory services.

PGA TO RUN WEST PALM COURSES

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — A development company that includes the PGA of America will build and operate two public golf courses on the western edge of the city. The city will issue between \$10 million and \$15 million in tax-free bonds to pay construction costs of the project, which recently received unanimous City Commission approval.

Whitley Development Corp. will build the courses. The PGA will run them, using all but 5 percent of revenue to repay the bonds.

COSTA MESA SELECTS MANAGEMENT CO.

COSTA MESA, Calif. — The City Council has decided to negotiate exclusively with Mesa Verde Partners for operation of the city's two public golf courses. The city hopes to realize \$28 million over the next 15 years from such an agreement. The future of 18 full-time city employees at the facilities is up in the air. Their pay could be cut as much as 25 percent. Additional plans call for grass reseeding at a cost of \$605,000, expanding lakes at both courses and installing new drainage and irrigation systems.

PALMER PROMOTES PAIR

TUCSON, Ariz. — Arnold Palmer Management Co. has named David Clay general manager and Quinton Gray director of golf services at Starr Pass Golf Club. Clay, a native of England, played golf professionally on the World Tour.

Gray, like Clay a PGA member, has been a Senior Tour member since 1986.

CELANO JOINS DORAL

MIAMI — Paul Celano has been named director of golf at the 99-hole, 2,400-acre Doral Resort and Country Club. A member of the PGA of America, Celano will oversee all aspects of the golf operation, including close work with the grounds and greens departments.

Club Corp. heads north of the border

By HAL PHILLIPS

The dollar values on either side of the 48th parallel may vary day to day, but the economic realities don't. The viability of golf course developments conceived during the real-estate speculation boom is tenuous on both sides of the U.S.-Canadian border.

After biding its time, Club Corp. appears ready to capitalize on the situation. The world's largest golf course management company has lined up its first three golf acquisitions north of the border. Five more could soon be in the offing.

"All three of our new clubs were previously ill-advised as to the strength of the [real-estate golf] market," explained Randy Williams, Club Corp.'s director of business development. "The clubs are solvent, but they received some bad advice. In Ontario, the market has cratered."

"We've been looking at the

Canadian market for some time. It had been a situation where Canada wasn't ready for us and we weren't ready for Canada. But over the last two years we've made a concerted effort to get involved and it has blossomed into some deal flow."

The yield includes Granite Springs Country Club in Halifax, Nova Scotia; Kings Valley Country Club in Aurora, Ontario; and The Spring Lakes Country Club in nearby Stouffville. Five more Canadian projects are under discussion and 10 to 15 remain in the embryonic stage, he said.

The three private clubs have potential, said Williams, but they desperately need new management focus. They can also use Club Corp.'s experience in stabilizing clubs caught in the real-estate gambit, he said.

"In Canada, it seems they're just getting into the idea of master-plan communities," said

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Workers' comp costs steady

By PETER BLAIS

While the cost of workers' compensation insurance is a troublesome issue in certain parts of the country, overall, golf course management companies have been able to keep costs down.

"Our experience is that workers' comp costs have been relatively flat over the past few years," said American Golf Corp. Vice President Mike Heacock. "In fact, they went down last year, even in California, where people claim workers' comp costs are driving businesses out of the state."

Some abuse of workers' compensation benefits likely occurs at Club Corporation of America, said Charles Faubion, regional superintendent for the company's Central Division. But he had no personal knowledge that it has occurred and it

doesn't seem to be a major issue, he added.

"It seems like a terribly mismanaged area," Faubion said.

"You never know when someone claims he hurt his back, for instance, whether he did it on the job or not. And once a person says he is injured, you have little choice but to pay

him.

"False claims are hard to track down. You can't check the workers' doctors or the tests they order. You just can't verify a lot of this stuff."

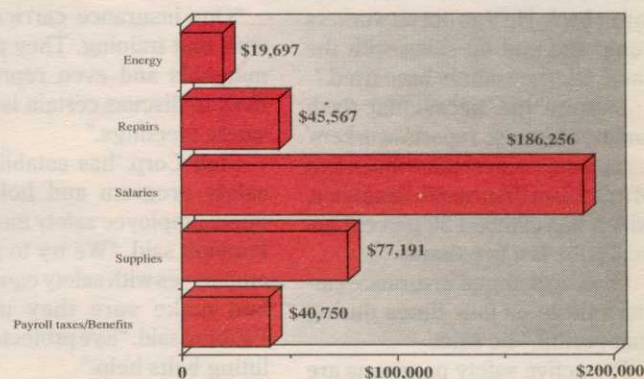
Heacock agreed, noting problems AGC has encountered at one Southern California facility.

"We bring on a maintenance employee, and within 5 or 6 months, he's likely to end up at a certain health clinic," he said.

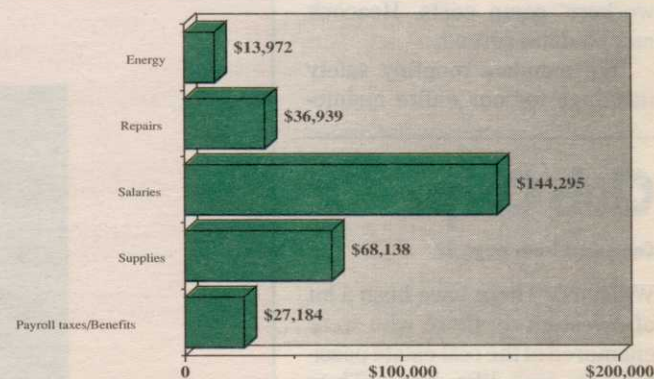
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1991 Average Maintenance Expenses by Region

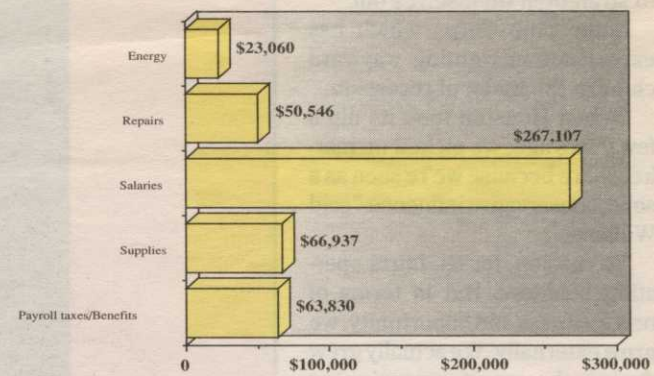
Mountain/Pacific



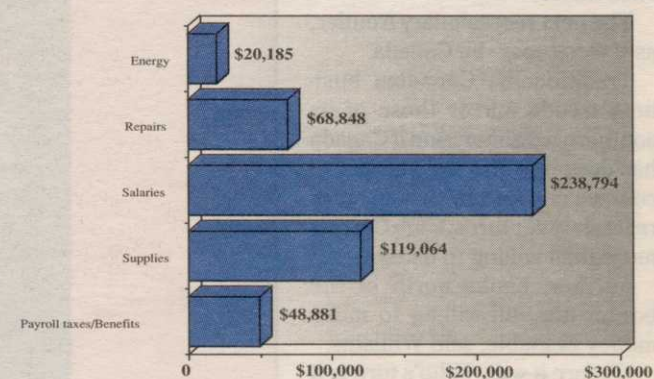
North Central



Mid-Atlantic



South Atlantic



Source: Panell Kerr Forster

GCN announces speakers for Public Golf Conference

CHICAGO — *Golf Course News* has announced the program and speakers for its new conference, "Public Golf '92," scheduled for Nov. 1-3, at Oak Brook Hills Hotel and Resort in Oak Brook, Ill. Managers of public golf facilities, including municipal and daily fee, should plan to attend.

"The program will provide a comprehensive look at the development and management of public golf courses," according to Mark Leslie, managing editor of *Golf Course News* and conference program chairman.

Topics will include trends in public golf facilities; profit-minded planning, feasibility, expansion and construction, financing,

approval processes, managing and maintaining the operation, and marketing strategies.

Featured presenters include: Raymond Finch Jr., co-owner of Emerald Dunes Golf Course; John Potts, director of Peoria Parks District; Stuart Cohen, president of Environmental and Turf Services; Vince Alfonso Jr., general manager and PGA head pro at The Rail in Springfield, Ill., and president of National Golf Course Owners Association; Richard Norton, VP and general manager, National Golf Foundation; Steve Lesnick, CEO at Kemper Sports Management; Ed Hoffman of Club Professional

Course Architects; Larry Flatt, president of Flatt Golf Services; Fred Jarvis, principal at LDR International Land Planners; Ron Boyd, president of Williamsburg Environmental Group; and Scott Marlowe, partner, Forecast Golf Marketing and Financial Systems.

Also on the program are Don Barnett, marketing director at First Golf; Mel Lucas, links counselor and turf consultant; Dean Wochaski, regional superintendent for American Golf Corp.; Reid Pryor, golf administrator, City of Indianapolis; Gary Gilson, partner-corporate finance with

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Workers' comp

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"He's usually diagnosed with the same problem others have had, lower back. He'll go out on workers comp and end up suing with the same attorney others have used."

Despite the occasional flash points, Heacock reports workers' comp insurance costs are much less of a problem than health insurance, which has climbed 30 percent annually the last five years.

"We've changed insurance carriers three or four times during that period," he said.

Pro-active safety programs are the main reasons AGC and Club Corp. have been able to control workers' comp costs, Heacock and Faubion agreed.

"We mandate monthly safety meetings for our entire mainte-

nance staff," Heacock said. "And we promote a company culture of caring about our employees. We want to take care of potential problems before they threaten employees."

"Our insurance carriers help with that training. They provide materials and even representatives to discuss certain issues at safety meetings."

Club Corp. has established a safety program and holds frequent employee safety meetings, Faubion said. "We try to protect employees with safety equipment and make sure they use it," Faubion said. "Eye protectors and lifting belts help."

Vickers, Kopplin form management firm

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Vickers-Kopplin and Associates, a new golf management and consulting firm, has moved into the golf marketplace bearing a "unique" approach to course development.

After a decade of developing courses in Arizona and Colorado, Michael Vickers and Richard Kopplin have pooled their resources to bring what they term "a comprehensive and unique perspective to golf course operations."

Both men were involved in

development of Castle Pines near Denver, Desert Highlands and Desert Mountain, both in Scottsdale. Kopplin's expertise lay on the club operations side, while Vickers focused on the marketing and real estate sales in all three developments.

"We have been very excited about the response to our company in the marketplace," said Kopplin. "We have supervised construction of a \$13 million, 52,000-square-foot clubhouse and the opening of three (Jack) Nicklaus-signature courses."

"We have also set up successful sales and marketing programs for them and have been very involved in all three communities as president of the homeowners associations and serving on the design review committees."

"We started the company in early 1992 and we have been retained by Desert Mountain in a consulting role," Kopplin continued. "We also have been assisting Lyle Anderson in planning his new facilities in Santa Fe, N.M."

Club Corp.

Continued from page 27

Williams. "There have been a lot of investors up there who were enamored of the real-estate possibilities, just like here. They thought it was easy."

"Our three new clubs just need to straighten themselves out."

Enter Club Corp., which has experience in righting wayward clubs in the midst of recession.

"When Houston took its dip a few years ago, we picked up market share because we're seen as a solid, conservative influence," said Williams.

"Recession, for us, hurts operating business. But in terms of new business and opportunity, we grow externally. We actually grew during the worst recessionary times because of the stable-influence factor."

The next recessionary frontier, as it were, may be Canada.

Traditionally, Canadian business trends mirror those of its southern neighbor. And if Canada has even one-fifth the number of courses crippled by ill-conceived real estate ventures, Club Corp. is more than willing to listen.

Further, banks north of the border are still willing to make money available, said Williams.

"Before it was, 'Who's turn is it to go to Canada?'"

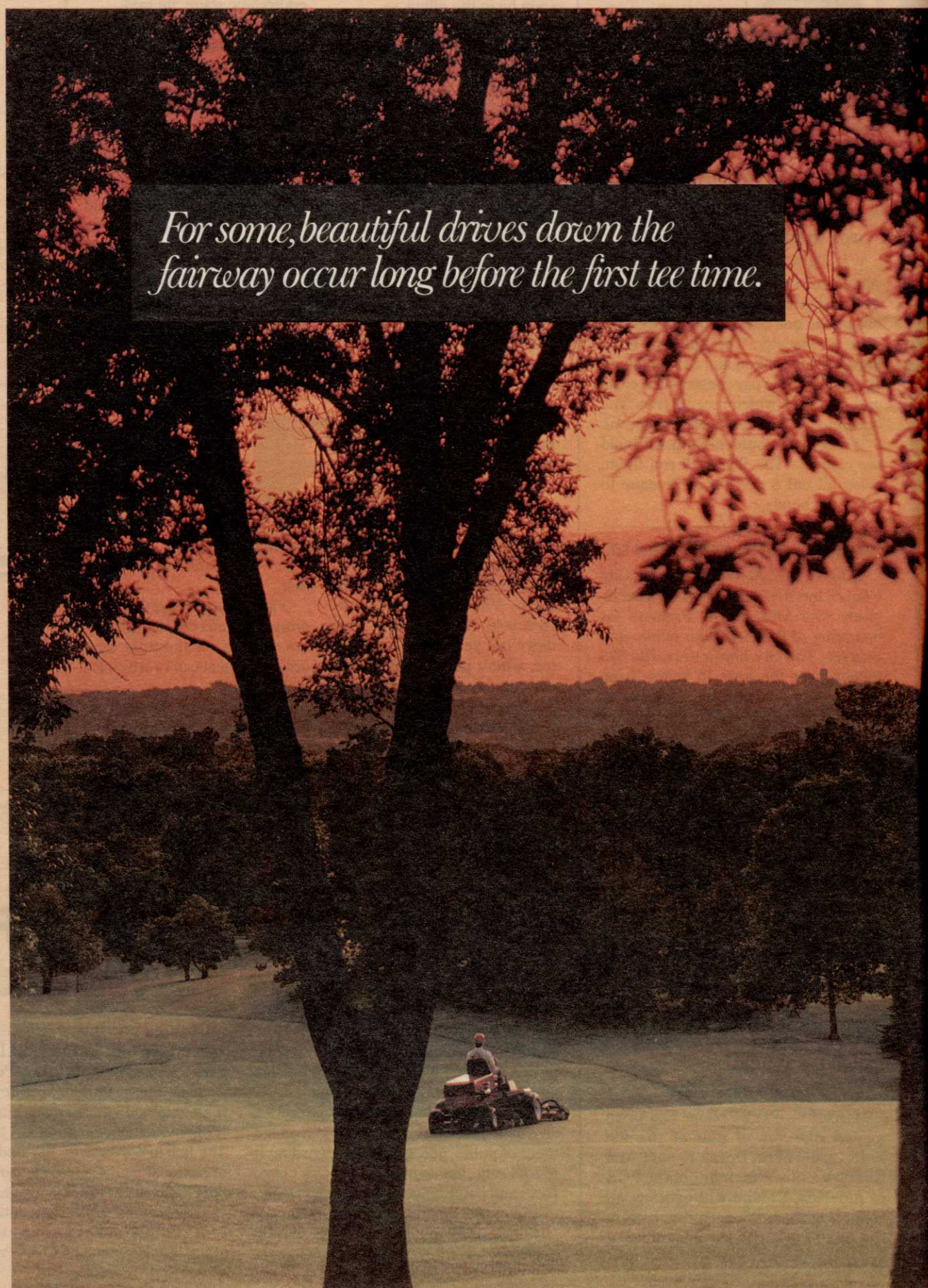
"But we have put some of our best people up there, and we want to demonstrate that we can be as successful in the Canadian market as we are in the U.S. market."

GCN conference

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Shook, Hardy & Bacon; Ken James, senior vice president for golf operations at American Golf Corp.; William Irwin, president of Golf West Companies; and Tim Sedgely, superintendent at Royal Melbourne Golf Course

For more information, call the *Golf Course News* conference group at 207-846-0600.



For some, beautiful drives down the fairway occur long before the first tee time.