

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Gary Grigg and Steve Maas ply their nurturing trades wherever new courses emerge ..... 16 & 31

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## Kiawah purchase blocked

By PETER BLAIS

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Believing the potential buyers could not live up to environmental deed restrictions imposed on the property, a bankruptcy judge has nullified the Resolution Trust Corp.'s sale of the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island to the New York Audubon Society and financial partner Virginia Investment Trust.

The RTC opted not to appeal the judge's ruling and will auction off the property again at some as-yet-unspecified date.

South Carolina District Court Judge Falcon Hawkins' ruling reflects the sensitive environmental nature of the Ocean Course, portions of which are located within the boundary of the Coastal Barrier Resources System covered by the federal Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990.

In his six-page order, Hawkins said VIT told the court that a deed restriction in the closing documents was not part of its original bid agreement and would make it difficult for VIT to operate the facility.

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TOM'S RUN

The idyllic par-3, 8th hole at Tom's Run Golf Course at Chestnut Ridge, a new Ault, Clark & Associates design outside Pittsburgh. The daily-fee Tom's Run opened for play this spring.

## Course development booming on Indian land

By HAL PHILLIPS

Indian culture and golf would appear, on the surface, to be strange developmental bedfellows. But the sovereign-nation status enjoyed by many Native American groups — plus the creation of destination resorts alongside gaming institutions — have resulted in more and more (tee-time) reservations on the reservation.

- In Riverside, Calif., the Temecula Band of Luiseno Indians is planning a \$15 million complex with casino, hotel, golf course, entertainment and shopping center. Under a proposal from the Alex Michaels Group of Companies, each of the 500 tribal members on the Pechanga Reservation would receive \$300,000 over the next seven years.

- In Ledyard, Conn., the wildly successful Foxwoods Casino — run by the

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RECOGNIZING THE APACHE SPIRIT

"The Nomad," sculpted by Michael D'Ambrosi, rises to its new home overlooking the 18th green at Desert Mountain's Renegade Course in Scottsdale, Ariz. "I hope my monument to the Apache will help us recognize the free spirit within all of us," said D'Ambrosi. "Our soul is our only real possession."

## Winter kill a boon to sod growers

By MARK LESLIE

A nightmare spring of winter kill has left superintendents in the Southeast frustrated, but fertilizer producers and sod growers ringing the cash registers. "There are a couple

things for sure: It's a good year for sod producers and fertilizer companies. And a good year to be a turf consultant," said Patrick O'Brien, director of the Southeastern Region for the U.S. Golf Association Green Section.

Saying the turf industry "can't handle anything with this magnitude of loss," O'Brien said: "[Superintendents] have got to get on the [waiting] list to get a sprigging machine and to buy sod. Sprigging machines and Bermudagrass sod in the Southeast are in

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## New zoysias may provide the best of both worlds

By MARK LESLIE

In a perfect world, a golf course superintendent could choose a turfgrass that uses as little water



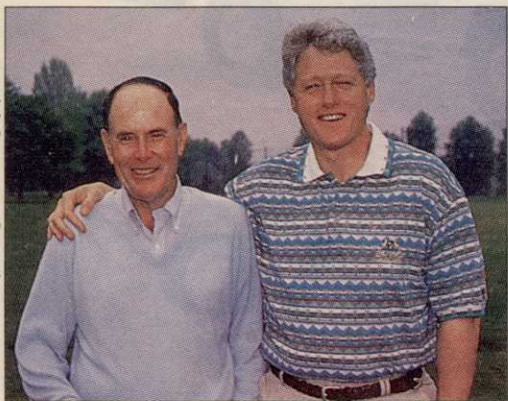
Kevin Morris

as buffalograss and can thrive even if that water is low-grade effluent; a grass that is heat-tolerant like Bermudagrass but with far better disease and pest resistance; a grass that, at the same time, provides golfers a quality playing surface.

According to some, that perfect world now exists in certain areas of the country, with the advent of the new generation of zoysiagrasses.

"Nobody's sure how big the potential is, but it's big," said Kevin Morris, director of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program administered by the U.S. Depart-

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### PRESIDENTIAL PARDON?

Could it be President Bill Clinton has pardoned architect Pete Dye for his diabolically penal designs? No, the two recently played a charity event at Crooked Stick in Carmel, Ind. For the story on Pete's publishing career, see page 32.

### COURSE MAINTENANCE

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## Kiawah sale

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"Buyer [New York Audubon] concurs with KRA (Kiawah Resort Associates) and VIT that the closing documents proposed by Debtor [Landmark Land Co./RTC] are not in accordance with closing documents contemplated by the agreement," explained Hawkins in his written ruling setting aside the sale.

Before deciding not to appeal the decision, the judge's action had created several possible scenarios, according to RTC spokeswoman Felicia Neuringer. The RTC could have:

- accepted the ruling and reopened the bidding process to all potential buyers, for-profit entities as well as the non-profit groups and governmental bodies that had exclusive bidding rights to the property the first time around;
- appealed the judge's decision;
- attempted to get New York Audubon and VIT, which bid \$27 million for the property, to accept all the environmental provisions and sign a legally binding guarantee not to back out of the deal at the last minute; or
- negotiated a new deal acceptable to the judge, RTC, New York Audubon and VIT.

"We would have liked the judge to accept the [original] deal," Neuringer said. "We looked at all our options. Based on our attorneys' advice, we determined the prospects of an appeal simply weren't advantageous."

"It might have tied up things in court for another year. We felt it was in the taxpayers' best interest to expedite the sale rather than continue to rack up more management and legal fees."

New York Audubon Executive Director and Counsel John Santacrose said his organization would have liked to resolve the situation.

"It will be interesting to see how this ends up," said Santacrose, whose organization will receive its 5 percent deposit back.

Under restrictions of the federal Coastal Barrier Improvement Act, however, bidding on the environmentally sensitive Ocean Course was restricted to qualified, non-profit and government groups for a period of 180 days. New York Audubon's bid won. But the 180-day window has lapsed, meaning RTC can put the course back out to bid and anyone can make an offer on the property.

"That could mean a higher price or a lower one," said Neuringer, whose organization is charged with obtaining the highest price possible for the course under provisions of the federal savings and loan bailout program.

"All we can say for sure is that it will ultimately be sold. RTC is not in the business of operating golf courses."

In the meantime, VIT subsidiary AMF Inc. continues to manage the Ocean Course, site of the 1991 Ryder Cup.

## Workers' Comp question? You're not alone...

In response to numerous requests for a list of states where enabling legislation has been passed that could result in workers compensation savings, the Frank Gates Service Co. of Columbus, Ohio, provided the following list.

Individual and group self insurance is available in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York,

North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee and Virginia.

Legislation is pending for individual and group insurance in Indiana and New Jersey. In Nebraska self insurance is permitted for public only. Coverage can only be obtained from the state (monopolistic) in Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming.

Limitations exist within many states. For more info, contact Frank Gates or National Sales Manager Charles Freutel at 614-793-8000.

## Golf Communities invest in Pinehurst

PINEHURST, N.C. — Recently formed Golf Communities USA, Ltd., has purchased two properties here. The Orlando, Fla.-based investment group, headed by Warren Stanchia, acquired majority interests in Pinehurst National and Pinehurst Plantation.

Both are 500-acre developments that will have more than 1,000 home sites when fully developed. Arnold Palmer designed Pinehurst Plantation Golf & Country Club and Jack Nicklaus designed Pinehurst National. The company plans \$7 million in property devel-

opment and new clubhouse facilities at Pinehurst Plantation.

Golf Communities USA is also developing the Montverde Country Club, a 460-lot golf course subdivision west of Orlando, Fla.

The company is under contract to acquire a 9,000-acre project in Tennessee, is pursuing negotiations to buy a South Florida project and is considering development in Atlanta. Projects are also under consideration in Arizona and the Carolinas. Stanchia has previously developed, owned and operated courses in Florida, Michigan and Texas.

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