

## BRIEFS



## ARCHITECTS GO ON-LINE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

DesigNetwork, the online information system of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), now gives members the ability to interface with Internet. Linking architects, contractors, designers, engineers, planners and the environmental industry, the service now has 1,000 regular users interfacing on issues ranging from design to specification, new projects and employment. More information is available from John Stump or Regina Travers at 202-686-2752.

## LOHMANN DESIGN OPENS

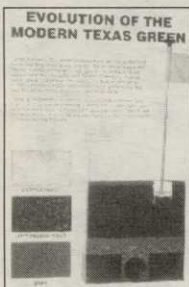
MOSINEE, Wis. — Nine new holes and three reconstructed holes on the old nine have given a brand-new look to Indianhead Golf and Recreation, which opened here June 4. Lohmann Golf Designs, Inc. and Midwest Golf Development, Inc. provided design/build services for the project. Three new holes were routed on the existing nine and all new greens and tees were constructed. The new nine makes it an 18-hole par 72 track. A new automatic irrigation system and pump station were added. Mature forest, rolling topography, and wetland pockets provide scenic views and excellent playability.

## TRENT JONES IN IRELAND

COUNTY LIMERICK, Ireland — An agreement has been reached between The Robert Trent Jones Cos. and New York financier Tom Kane, and construction has resumed on an 18-hole championship course here. Nine holes of the course were built before the project was abandoned in 1990, when the ownership group of the Adarc Manor Hotel, led by Kane, could not sustain funding for the project. The course is expected to be ready for play late this fall.

## TEXAS HALL OF FAME OPEN

THE WOODLANDS, Texas — The new Texas Golf Hall of Fame, which opened April 26 at The Woodlands, honors the people who build and maintain golf courses as well as the players. An eight-panel exhibit, titled "Where We Play," tells the history of course design itself, as well as that of the four courses at The Woodlands. The course designers are all represented — Joe Lee, Arnold Palmer, Robert von Hagge and Carlton Gipson. The Hall is open, free of charge, every day from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



## Oak Grove Island a golden egg for Golden Isles?

By SALLY LEE

BRUNSWICK, Ga. — As shelved lagoons and natural brush habitat have kept environmentalists satisfied, owners hope reasonable prices will keep Golden Isles area golfers happy at the new championship daily-fee Oak Grove Island Club.

"We wanted to give the Golden Isles a plush, resort-type golf course offering year-round affordability, and I feel we've done exactly that," said Mike Evans, president of Oak Grove Island Plantation, Inc., which owns the course. "This is a championship-quality course where a round of golf, including cart, costs \$25 to \$30. It's something that did not exist in this area before and it's something the people here can be very proud of."

Design-wise, during design and construction architect Mike Young received input from the Audubon Society on protecting and managing native wildlife. He incorporated such things as natural brush habitats for birds, bluebird houses and shelves in all lagoons.

The shelved lagoons ensure that native vegetation will continue to flourish by eliminating the steep banks common to many golf course ponds. The shallow shelves, approximately six inches deep, extend out from the edge of the pond about six or eight feet. The habitat is ideal for the reeds and cattails found in the area.

The club was developed in conjunction



Oak Grove Island Golf Club's bunkering shows the handiwork of designer Mike Young.

with a residential community offering more than 500 building sites with waterfront, marsh or golf course views. Accessible by boat or causeway, it also features a full-service deep water marina.

All this offered opportunity as well as challenge to Young, of Watkinsville. He designed and built the 18-hole layout

taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by the 200-acre primeval site.

Situated on a 700-acre interior marsh island fronted by the Buffalo and Turtle rivers and offering direct access to the Intracoastal Waterway, the course is not only surrounded by winding waterways,

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## QA & A

### Knott: Onus for change is on architects

Don Knott, chief designer for Robert Trent Jones II in Palo Alto, Calif., is responsible for nearly 20 top-rated courses in the United States, Japan and Australia. He owns a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture and master's degree in architecture from the University of California-Berkeley. Managing Editor Mark Leslie spoke with Knott when he took the gavel as president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

**Golf Course News:** What are your biggest challenges during your presidency?

**Don Knott:** I don't think they will be significantly different than what the golf world has been facing over the last several years. Ongoing environmental issues which will be so critical. You've got what seems to be a fairly negative perception of the game, particularly by non-golfers. That is directly related in some ways to the environment. Although we're not directly involved, the golf world is facing continuous legal challenges involving liability and equipment.

But what I'd like to push from a golf architectural point of view is a broadening of the scope of what I call an "acceptable" golf course. Over time, since the game started, the definition of what is acceptable in the eyes of the public and the golfer has continued to narrow. We started with an obstacle course over natural, raw terrain. We continue to become a bowling alley — a very narrowly defined concept of what is an acceptable course.

**GCN:** Is there a way for you to turn the tide?

**DK:** I think it's mainly public relations. It's guys like Pete Dye, for example, standing up and saying, "We've got to go



Don Knott enjoys playing the game as well as designing the courses.

back and put some old courses out in the field somewhere, and just hit the ball around." Condition is a factor. Always seeing [on television] perfectly conditioned golf courses has been an issue for years. Augusta National is in perfect condition, and it has become the standard. There are things you can do, but it's going to be a hard issue to sell to the general public.

**GCN:** Would the ASGCA membership want to take a stance on the issue?

**DK:** I think a lot of them would love to. There are so many courses pushing in the opposite direction. You've got the whole real-estate economics of the golf course ...

Continued on next page

## ASGCA's outgoing president: Banks seeing light of golf's success

Competition among financial institutions, fueled by generally improved operating results, is opening the door to more funding opportunities for golf development projects, according to Jerry Matthews, who stepped down in April as president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA).

"The financial community is definitely looking more favorably on golf course projects than it did two years ago when everything was labeled 'real estate,' and therefore to be avoided," Matthews said. "We have the opportunity to build a stronger industry and further improve our image with the financial community," he said.

For that to happen, Matthews said the golf industry must:

- Prove that golf course projects are sound investments when properly designed, built and managed.

- Help golf property developers and related industry professionals to accurately calculate the cost and profit potential of a project.

Matthews said more private investors and contractors are taking a direct equity position in golf course projects. From a risk-adjusted rate of return, golf course developments are often better investments than commercial or industrial real-estate projects, he said.

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Jerry Matthews

## Accessibility issues face designers

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maximum distances of every 75 yards from golf car paths if terrain permits.

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Special recommendations for altered courses include:

- Existing practice areas at courses or stand-alone practice areas, if altered, shall be made accessible.
- If practice bunkers or greens are provided at practice areas, they would not have to be altered just because the practice tee area is altered.
- Repair of existing golf car paths would not constitute alterations.

• If an existing teeing ground is altered on one or more holes, one tee on that hole shall be made accessible.

• Alteration of a teeing ground means changing the physical dimensions—length, width or elevation.

• Resodding, reseeding, changing grass types or adding sprinklers on tees are not considered alterations.

• Altering the tee or green on one hole does not require altering tees or greens on all other holes.

• There should not be any alteration design issues for rebuilding putting surfaces on existing greens.

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CIRCLE #126

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CIRCLE #127

## Banks seeing the light

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Bond financing also will continue to be an important source of new capital for public courses, according to Matthews. This will happen for two reasons. First, cities and counties have access to land that private developers cannot afford to buy. Second, yield requirements from the projects are typically lower for a public body than a private investor because the venture is not profit-driven.

Another source of new capital is the "mezzanine" or "second-tier" corporate lenders, said Matthews. Large corporations, such as Textron and GATX, established financial units that provide many of the same services as banks, but are not bound by the same regulations. These financial arms can function as debt lenders or equity partners, or both.

These corporate lenders are also creating new programs that actually participate with banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions to fund mortgages for golf courses.

Lower returns from traditional sources have encouraged pension fund managers to re-think their investment philosophies, Matthews said.

Currently, most long-term investments are not providing fund managers with acceptable returns. Thus, he said, some state pension funds are considering other investments.

Large golf projects, such as the Robert Trent Jones Trail in Alabama, may become attractive to more fund managers in the future.

## Oak Grove Island

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but laced with creeks, marshes and lagoons.

Ten acres of the golf course site were officially designated as wetland areas.

Every hole offers marsh and lagoon views, and on many holes the water comes directly into play.

The fact that the site offered more above-sea-level area to work with than most locations of its kind gave Young the leeway necessary to create a course that is flowing rather than flat.

Most holes have four sets of tees and at its longest, the par-72 course will play 7,050 yards.

GOLF COURSE NEWS