

BRIEFS



PALMER NAMES GONZALEZ VP

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Barbara González has been appointed vice president and director of business development for the Palmer Design Co. González has been with the company for 22 years — since its inception during the early 1970s. She travels extensively in Europe, the Pacific Rim and domestically for discussions with prospective clients and participates in many trade/conference exhibitions. She is a full member of the Urban Land Institute.



Barbara González

FOSTER PROMOTES SCHAUPETER

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Arthur Schaupeter has been promoted to lead design associate with Keith Foster Golf Course Design here. He will manage the firm's plan production and specification development. Meanwhile, Jason Hollen, a landscape architecture graduate of West Virginia University, has joined the design staff.

CUPP IMPROVING STONEBRIDGE

NAPLES, Fla. — Stonebridge Country Club, a 313-acre residential development centered around an 18-hole golf course here, has completed its first phase of improvements. Upgrades included widening the landing areas of holes 1, 2, and 4. Stonebridge developer Taylor Woodrow Communities recently acquired several preserved acres that were part of the community's property. Taylor Woodrow has committed \$300,000 to improving the golf course. Bob Cupp, who designed the original course along with Gene Bates, is overseeing the course improvements.

ST. JAMES ADDING 18

SOUTHPORT, N.C. — St. James Plantation is constructing a second 18-hole championship golf course in the community's second phase of development. Called The Members Course, the track is being built by the community's developer, Homer E. Wright, Jr. Golf course architect is Clyde Johnston & Associates, of Hilton Head, S.C. The new course complements the existing 18-hole Dye-designed layout. The new clubhouse, the second for St. James Plantation, will be designed by architect David R. Polston of Wilmington, N.C.



Clyde Johnston

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Back in 1936 Tilly foresaw a world with no sand nor traps

By J. BARRY MOTHES

PORTLAND, Maine — "Golf Course of Future Will have No Sand Nor Traps, Expert Predicts"

A headline from the *National Golf Enquirer*?

No, just Albert W. Tillinghast getting a bit apocalyptic back in 1936.

Tillinghast, the Philadelphia playboy and renowned golf course architect who designed Baltusrol, Winged Foot and the San Francisco Golf Club to name a few, was hired by the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) of America in the mid-1930s to advise its member clubs on alterations. At the time, 11 national championships had been played on his courses in the preceding 16 years.

As part of his charge, Tillinghast traveled the country for more than a year as a PGA-sponsored adviser. He met with golf course superintendents and pros, toured golf courses and offered advice. By September 1936 he had visited 322 courses. In September 1936, Tillinghast visited Portland



On the golf course A.W. Tillinghast foresaw in 1936, there would be no saving or threatening sand bunkers like these at the Jay Morrish-, Tom Weiskopf-designed Buffalo Creek Golf Club in Rockwall, Texas.

Country Club here.

A few excerpts from his visit reported by the Portland Sunday Telegram:

"The golf course of the not too distant future will have neither rough nor sand, except [where] it be unavoidable," A.W. Tillinghast, widely known golf course architect, predicted Saturday afternoon.

"Mr. Tillinghast expressed his strong disapproval of sand on golf courses, and said that golf courses 10 years hence

would have none of it... Of course, he said, seaside courses will be bound to have some sand on them, but why should a beautiful inland course be cluttered with it?"

But, Tillinghast added, "Sandless courses won't be any less difficult to score than those of today... The science of golf courses will be built into the contours of the greens and the approaches to them..."

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The rebuilt 16th hole greensite as per Langford at Ozaukee Country Club in Megeon, Wis.

QA Forse masterminds 'oldies' remakes, longs for his own

Having grown up at the Donald Ross-designed Mountain Ridge Country Club in New Jersey, it's no wonder Ron Forse now makes his living in large part remodeling "courses by the classics." The West Virginia University landscape architecture alumnus, who has worked with architects Brad Benz, J. Michael Poellot and Ron Fream, is also designing his own tracks. He is collaborating with Ross Forbes for a new nine at Methodist College in Fayetteville, N.C., and the two are in the midst of eight long-range improvement plans, including a remodeling of the Herbert Strong-designed Nassau Country Club on Long Island. Managing editor Mark Leslie caught up with him at Portland (Maine) Country Club, a Ross-designed, oceanside track Forse was visiting.

Golf Course News: Are people more aware of course designers than they were five, 10, 20 years ago?

Ron Forse: Yes. Now guys who aren't big internationally are being promoted. People like Art Hills. It's like "designer" labels to some degree. People are putting the names of the architects on advertisements, promotional materials and scorecards. This is a news occurrence. People now know because of the media attention to architects. In the mid-'80s people all of a sudden became aware.



Ron Forse

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Myrtle Beach's North Course faces major changes from Palmer

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — Arnold Palmer and the Palmer Design Group have returned here this summer to oversee substantial changes to the famous North Course at Myrtle Beach National Golf Club, a 54-hole complex. The course closed May 1, and is scheduled to re-open in October. The South and West Courses at Myrtle Beach National remain open throughout the summer.

The North Course was originally designed by Arnold Palmer in the early 1970s. It was among the first courses at the Beach, and one of the first courses anywhere to feature an "island" green. The North Course's par-3 3rd hole, with an island green and "SC" shaped bunkers has remained the signature hole for the entire Grand Strand.

What began as a minor updating of the North Course has evolved into a project of total course design and visual enhancement under the direction of the Palmer Group. The bentgrass greens will be re-shaped and enlarged, and then sodded with the new hybrid Crenshaw bentgrass. Many trees have been removed. Several fairways will feature increased undulation, and bunkers and lakes will be reshaped. The 3rd hole is undergoing major enhancement, with the addition of bulkheads and a new bridge.

Myrtle Beach National is owned by the Myrtle Beach National Co.

Q&A: Ron Forse

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Before then, they were clueless. GCN: What first got you interested in golf course design? Why not landscape architecture at resorts, or nature trails...?

RF: My interest was golf before landscape architecture, even though that is my degree. When I was 11 years old, I was on Route 46 in Pinebrook, N.J., and saw a pitch-and-putt course with old quartz bunkers facing the road and not the golf hole. Something about that caught me. And when I was in junior high school I got so excited watching the Masters that I went out in my

best friend's backyard and we laid out a pitch-and-putt course.

Then I started caddying in 1972. Later, I went to work on the maintenance crew for [Maurice] Skip Cameron, who is just now retiring from Canoe Brook [in Summit, N.J.]. Then I went to work in the golf shop finishing and repairing clubs.

GCN: So you got the golf bug entirely before design.

RF: Right. Then I found that architecture is a great blend between art, the hard sciences and sports. It's the only profession that blends those. Plus, the need to go out and sell. I love to sell.

GCN: Why your interest in Ross, [Alister] Mackenzie and

the other old-time designers in particular?

RF: It's mainly subjective. The inherent quality, the intrigue of these old places, the hand-made look, the boldness of the features.

GCN: Aren't features more bold now?

RF: The bunkers are not necessarily as bold or dramatic, because one of the things we're so concerned about today is maintenance. We've taken away the drama of some of the huge bold features, like the gigantic crossing bunkers that were at Portland [CC in Maine] in days gone by. You look at the old pictures of Nassau. And Seth Raynor in Long Island did a moat hole and there is this huge expanse of land. Now there are just narrow bands of sand on three sides of the green. They are still dramatic. They're 12 feet deep.

GCN: What do you see as the main differences between architecture today and then?

RF: We're missing a lot of variety because of drone features. There is too much sameness today. The machines drone the same mounds over and over again.

The classic architects were very similar to each other in their philosophies, although the character of their features and certain things they would do — little nuances of design — were really different. But they all agreed that roughs were never introduced as a hazard. You don't pull rough in to make it a hazard.

If you could somehow combine the routing genius of William Flynn, the boldness of expression of [Charles Blair] Macdonald and Raynor, the strong strategic design of Mackenzie and the naturalness of Ross, you'd have a great design. "Natural" here means indigenous.

If people studied these old

courses they would see some of these things and would implement them. Why can't people put in ridges around these undulating berms around greens instead of a series of bunkers?

GCN: What about equipment improvements? How have they changed design?

RF: Today, because of irrigation, you don't need fairways as wide. But you need hard, dry approaches to duplicate the green complexes [of the past]. The new equipment — the steel shafts, the new technology of the balls — has made it more of an aerial game; and it changes everything. But you can still design courses using the old principles.

GCN: So many people are huge fans of Ross. But you say Ross actually changed his design philosophy after World War II?

RF: After World War II, he started cutting very large, flat-bottomed grassy hollows and using that for fill on greens.

GCN: Then would he have moved as much earth today as other people, perhaps?

RF: I don't think he would have moved as much. I think he would have expanded his repertoire a bit. He would have taken more liberty moving earth on some green sites. He actually did move more earth on green sites after the earth-moving technology of World War II came along — like those expansive grassy hollows at Hartford Golf Club.

GCN: If you redo a Ross course that he designed in the 1920s, do you do so with the thought of what he would have done at that point in time or at a later time?

RF: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. I think it would be arbitrary to say, "Well, he would have changed this or that." When he came back to Rolling Rock [Golf Course in Ligonier, Pa.] in the

'40s after he had done it originally in 1917, he didn't change it. He just added more tees.

The classic architects would update their courses. I talked to William Langford's son, Tom, and he said his dad in the '30s — with the steel shafts and other advances in the game — did actually relocate fairway bunkers further from the tee. Updating was being done even 60 years ago.

GCN: Is Ross your favorite?

RF: I don't want to overemphasize Ross. Other people did other things well. Flynn was great at routing and using the land, but his bunker style was not my favorite. Flynn's greens were good, but were plain, not intricate. He didn't do a lot of changes of levels or ridges through greens, like I prefer. Mackenzie was fantastic with putting surfaces and was probably the strongest for bold strategic concepts in his designs. But Ross seemed to do the whole package well.

I've also become a huge fan of William Langford because of his bold strategy and bunkers. He's got one grass-bottomed fairway bunker at Lasonia Links in Green Lake, Wis., that is 150 feet long, 35 feet wide and 12 feet deep. That's a fairway bunker on a long par-4 that you have to carry if you want to reach the green in two. That is a bold concept.

I'm also a big fan of the bunkering at Oakmont. That is great stuff — big, bold. And you can't leave out Raynor and Macdonald. I think The National Golf Links [by Macdonald] is the best-designed golf course in the country. Scotland's first course, St. Andrews, I think, is architecturally the best golf course over there. And over here, the first good golf course was The National, and I think it's still the best. The boldness of the concepts, the strategy. It's almost a five-ring circus going on. There are features all over the place. There's so much to think about, even though many holes are not long.

You have to have those wide golf corridors to do that. On great strategic holes, you need generous widths to give various strategic paths to the green. We're limited from that sort of thing with land use today. Also, we don't have the sites. Oftentimes we're extremely limited. Yet, Marion was limited in land and they still have a great, strategic course. The emphasis on strategy is important because it allows every level of golfer to enjoy his round.

GCN: Now that you are becoming better known, would you like to do more new construction?

RF: Yes. It's exciting because of all the things we've learned by studying the best architects.

GCN: What would be your trademark?

RF: That's a problem. We don't have an established style. As the land dictates, we're willing to work with greatly flashed bunkers, or with flat-bottomed, deep, grass-faced styles. We've done both.

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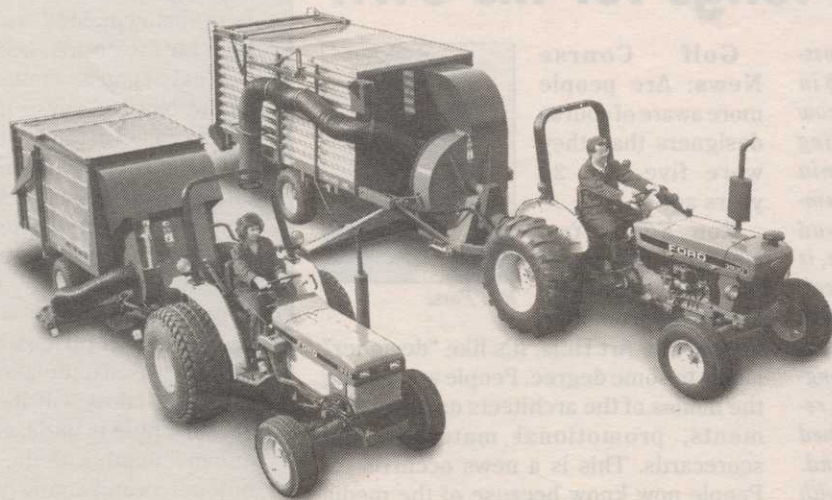
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CIRCLE #125

Harbottle, owner co-design Calif. track

STEVINSON, Calif. — The Savannah Course at Stevinson Ranch, an upscale public golf course in California's Central Valley, is scheduled to open Sept. 1.

Jointly designed by architect John Harbottle and co-owner George Kelley, the 18-hole, par-72 layout adheres to the character and traditions of the great Scottish links courses while preserving the native wetlands, terrain and habitat of the surrounding farmlands.

"It's the best thing I've ever done," said Harbottle.

"We expect to be ranked among the best new public golf courses in the country,"

said Kelley, whose Merced County dairy farming family is developing the project together with the San Francisco-based Lurie Co. The course has filed for inclusion in the Signature Program of the Audubon Society of New York, Kelley added.

With four sets of tees, Savannah stretches from 5,400 to 7,000 yards. The layout employs the risk-reward theory of design, requiring skilled shot-making and careful course management.

A 350-yard-long, dual-sided driving range is already open for practice from one end. Golfers on the all-grass practice tee are charged by time.



The 9th hole at Stevinson Ranch Golf Club's Savannah Course.

Q&A: Ron Forse

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[A.W.] Tillinghast was the same way. He changed his style constantly. At Sunnehanna that we are working on [in Johnstown, Pa.], it has very deep grass-faced bunkers. So does Sands Point on Long Island, where we've worked. And in other places like Newport [R.I.] Country Club, they're flashed. He did the same thing at Ridgewood in Gramace, N.J.

"Indigenous" and "strategic" are our watchwords, while being totally sound in the land-use multifunctional facets. We need courses that fit the land in their final form, and have no unnecessary earth-moving.

Basically, the art and functional side of construction still must serve the game ultimately. You can lose sight of that.

GCN: Have people lost sight of that?

RF: Sometimes. Art for art's sake on a golf course is not a great idea. The best synthesis is where you have dynamic-looking holes that make the game interesting and exciting. Holes that are good golf, that are done in a beautiful way that are maintainable and don't cost an arm and leg to build.

GCN: How would you describe your new courses?

RF: Our new work incorporates all the great strategic concepts. Royal Oaks [Golf Course in Lebanon, Pa] does that, and seems to be working. The place is full. And it shows there is room for good-quality public golf. Markets all over the country still need it. We need to do things [at public courses] like have bunkers that interrupt the line of flight, because it honors and compliments the daily-fee player with the choice of playing over the bunker, around it, or pulling up short.

GCN: Compare new construction and remodeling for us.

RF: New construction in some ways is harder. Some people say remodeling is harder. The hard part about remodeling is making sure of your style. You have to be a chameleon and make your style fit with what's there. With new work, you have a blank canvas. Depending on the site, there isn't as much inspiration. So, in order to come up with a good design, you plainly have to be a good designer.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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*Based on research conducted by the Center for Golf Course Management, a subsidiary of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

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