

BRIEFS



**COBBLESTONE BUYS HILLS AT LAKEWAY**

AUSTIN, Texas — Cobblestone Golf Group has acquired the Hills at Lakeway from The Hillwood Co., a real estate development firm operated by Ross Perot Jr. The complex includes three golf courses, The Academy of Golf and The World of Tennis. The Hills at Lakeway represents Cobblestone's largest single acquisition. Del Mar, Calif.-based Cobblestone operates 19 courses throughout the country.

**MARTTY INVADES ATLANTA**

ATLANTA — Martty Golf Management has signed a management consulting agreement to oversee construction, marketing and grand opening phases of The Heritage Club for developer Maurice Whyte. Construction has begun and plans are for the Mike Young-designed, 18-hole course to open in November, said President Thomas Martty.



Thomas Martty

**LA EXTENDS GOLFCORP LEASE**

DIAMOND BAR, Calif. — Los Angeles County has agreed to a 15-year extension of GolfCorp's management agreement at Diamond Bar Golf Course. The Club Corporation International subsidiary has operated the county-owned, 18-hole, daily-fee facility since 1987. More than \$1.4 million in course improvements are underway, including a renovated driving range and new irrigation system.

**AGCC SIGNS ON IN SACRAMENTO**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — American Golf Country Clubs (a division of American Golf Corp.) has received a long-term operating lease for Oaks Golf & Country Club in Nicolaus, located approximately 20 minutes from Sacramento. The private, 18-hole layout is tentatively scheduled to open early next year.

**NAG NAMES RIPPEY PRESIDENT**

LOMBARD, Ill. — Michael Rippey has been named president of North American Golf, the full-service course development and management company based here. Rippey takes over the position previously held by George Rourke, who will remain as principal stockholder and director. NAG manages seven courses, primarily in the Midwest.



Mike Rippey

MARKETING IDEA OF THE MONTH

The incentive is profits in the incentive business

By PETER BLAIS

Rewarding productive employees with travel vacations has been one of the most successful methods for corporations to keep their best workers.

Warmer locales such as Florida, Southern California, Hawaii and the Caribbean have been the traditional destinations to which companies have sent their best sales people, department heads who come in under budget or supervisors with strong safety records.

Increasingly, golf courses, particularly in Northern areas, are beginning to see corporate incentive travel as a way to fill rounds at their facilities and are tapping into the lucrative \$5.2 billion market (Society of Incentive Travel Executives figure).

"Corporate incentive packages make up 15 to 20 percent of our rounds," said Shanty Creek (Mich.) Director of Marketing Barry Godwin.

The incentive travel business at the Bellaire, Mich., complex has been growing steadily in recent years, Godwin said. Attracted by the nationally ranked Legend Course as well as the Northern Michigan resort's other three layouts, corporations are increas-



Shanty Creek Golf Course has successfully catered to the corporate incentive travel market.

ingly looking at the area's golf packages as a way to reward their best employees.

Incentive groups average about 50 people with average stays of two nights/three days, Godwin reported.

Incentive packages are typically discounted an average of 15 to 20 percent below the normal rate.

Some can be scheduled into slower times of the year, although most

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Official says clubs take insufficient time selecting course superintendent

By PETER BLAIS

SAN FRANCISCO — The superintendent is in charge of the primary asset at many clubs. And yet, few clubs take sufficient care in selecting the most important individual on the payroll, according to Reed Mackenzie, past president of Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn.

"The most important thing a club can do is analyze its own situation and decide what it wants from its superintendent," said Mackenzie, who has been part of the Hazeltine search committee for two superintendents, Chris Hague and his successor, Patty Knaggs.

No books or pamphlets were available to instruct the Hazeltine greens committee how to begin the search process when its superintendent abruptly quit back in 1982 just prior to the U.S. Senior Open.

The club was fortunate to land Hague,

Mackenzie said. The committee refined its technique and was better prepared when it hired Knaggs three years ago, he added.

While there is no standard operating procedure for hiring a course manager, Mackenzie recounted Hazeltine's guidelines during the International Conference and Show.

- Appoint a chairman of the search committee. The green chairman is often the person selected. The most important thing, however, is that it be someone with sufficient time to devote to the search.

- Establish a selection committee of three to six people. Members should be familiar with golf, club facilities, budgetary process and superintendent responsibilities. A woman and a financial expert should be part of the committee. Members should have eight to 10 weeks to devote to the search.

- Develop a detailed job description. This allows the committee to focus on its



Patty Knaggs

needs and applicants to know what will be expected. The GCSAA, association chapters, U.S. Golf Association and other clubs can help formulate a job description.

- In addition to lines of authority, salary and budget size, other items on the job description might include club expectations regarding the superintendent's participation in professional associations, educating interns, dealing with local government boards and enrolling in classes.

- Establish a compensation package that

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Nation's first public course marks centennial

NEW YORK CITY — Van Cortlandt Golf Course in the Bronx, the first public course to be built in the United States, will commemorate its 100th birthday with a week-long celebration beginning July 3.

American Golf Corp. (AGC) has operated the course for the city since 1992. "American Golf is proud to play a part in the recent history of this stately public course, which has served as both an invaluable recreational asset to the city of New York and a pioneering force in public golf course development for an unprecedented 100 years," said AGC President of Golf

Operations Kevin Roberts.

Van Cortlandt was originally designed as a nine-hole layout by T. McLure Peters at a cost of \$625 and opened in July 1895. Four years later, Thomas Bendelow remodeled the course and added the second nine holes. Bendelow later became general manager at Cortlandt and instituted the first-ever system of reserving tee times during peak periods.

The clubhouse, built in 1902, is still used. In fact the locker room, complete with wooden lockers, was featured in a scene from the movie "Wall Street" starring Michael Douglas.

Jones elected pres. of Nat'l Club Assn.

WASHINGTON — Hugh Jones was elected president of the National Club Association during the organization's recent annual meeting in Charleston, S.C.

Jones was partner-in-charge of the audit department in the Orlando office of KPMG Peat Marwick until retiring in 1991. He is a consultant to agribusinesses and not-for-profit organizations and a member and past president of the Country Club of Orlando.

A National Club Association member since 1990, Jones had previously served as treasurer. He succeeds James Maser, vice chairman of the board of ClubCorp International, as the association's president.

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## Storage tanks

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co-chairman of a task force charged with monitoring petroleum clean-up efforts for the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials.

With claims on the rise, all 46 states with government-controlled UST funds must be concerned with the possibility of claims outstripping revenues, Rounds added.

"The long-term projections can be pretty scary," he said.

Should golf course operators be concerned if the state funds they believed would insure them against spill problems are in financial trouble?

"Definitely," said Sammy Ng, branch chief in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's UST Division. "First, tank owners must be in compliance with federal financial requirements. If they can't get the needed \$1 million coverage through the state, then they must get private insurance. And that could be much more expensive.

"Second, if a state fund becomes insolvent that doesn't release the course owner from financial liability for clean-up or third-party compensation. The golf course would still be liable, even if the state fund folded."

A 1988 federal law required all tanks be closed, replaced or upgraded to meet leak-prevention guidelines within 10 years. Private insurers said they were willing to insure structurally sound tanks or those that would eventually meet the new federal standards. But insurers shied away from existing problems.

"Insurance companies don't insure burning buildings," Rounds noted.

With many privately un-insurable older tanks already leaking fuel into the ground, a mechanism to finance clean-up and compensation to third parties was needed. State funds were established to fill the void.

Those state programs have typically been financed by a few-cents-per-gallon surcharge on fuel sales and/or an annual per-tank charge to tank owners. While some programs were adequately financed, others soon realized that the cost of claims was outstripping revenues, leav-

ing those funds in a financial bind.

To avoid financial problems, EPA has encouraged states to require their funds to have larger cash reserves, higher deductibles and the authority to raise levies if revenues begin to fall behind claims, Ng said.

Pennsylvania has managed to avoid the financial pitfalls experienced elsewhere. In fact, the state's mandatory program is running a healthy surplus, according to George Chapman, claims manager with the state UST Identification Fund. The key to Pennsylvania's success is that it closely scrutinizes all claims and performed detailed actuarial studies regarding projected funding and costs before implementation, Chapman said.

"We control remediation costs by requiring that tank owners make serious efforts to have their tanks in compliance with state and federal laws," Chapman said.

To help control the number of claims it accepts and how much is paid, EPA encourages states to adopt risk-based corrective action processes. This method calls for a ranking so that those spills posing the greatest threat are cleaned first. Additionally, only the areas needing cleaning within the spill area are actually cleaned, thereby avoiding unnecessary costs.

Still several state programs are in trouble and could disappear in the near future unless their financial picture brightens. Additionally, many of the healthy

funds will likely be phased out as existing problems are taken care of. That means private insurance will be used more frequently in the future to cover tank owners, Ng said.

"That would be a good trend," Ng said. "Why should a state provide coverage if affordable, private insurance is available."

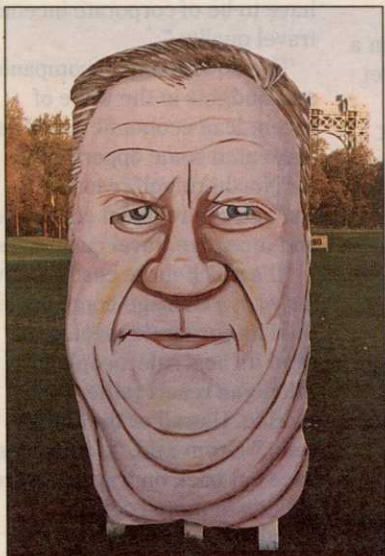
But tank owners frequently complain private insurance is too expensive. Not so, said David Brixen, an environmental scientist with the Delaware Division of Air and Water Management's UST Branch.

Delaware began enforcing financial responsibility requirements in December 1993 but soon suspended any enforcement actions when it realized many tank owners were failing to comply. The department established a special advisory committee to determine whether private insurance was indeed available and affordable, or if a state fund should be established.

The committee decided that private insurance was both easy to find and fairly inexpensive, making a state-operated program unnecessary.

"The average cost for a three-tank site [which includes most courses] is \$500 to \$600 a year. That's less than the 2 to 3 cents-per-gallon surcharge often used to finance state funds," Brixen said.

Beginning July 1, all Delaware tank owners/operators not in compliance will be subject to penalties ranging up to \$2,500 per day, Brixen said.



N.Y. Yankees owner George Steinbrenner was among four celebrities whose caricature was used as a target during a recent New York City fundraiser.

## Celebrities target of NYC charity effort

RANDALLS ISLAND, N.Y. — Four New York City personalities became the target of flying golf balls this spring when Randalls Island Golf and Family Entertainment Center unveiled 8-foot targets bearing the caricatures of David Letterman, Madonna, George Steinbrenner and Donald Trump.

The caricatures were part of a day-long fundraiser May 7 in which the public was invited to "Aim for the Stars" with a portion of fees benefiting local junior golf programs.

"The caricatures represent four of the city's most beloved and controversial residents, and we thought it would be a big hit to give local residents the chance to get out some good-humored aggression while raising funds for a worthy cause," said General Manager Rob Halabov.

American Golf Corp. operates the Randalls Island facility.

## Selecting a super

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includes salary, insurance, club privileges, vehicle and/or housing allowance.

- Identify candidates. If the job is advertised nationally, expect many applicants. Hazeltine advertised nationally in 1982 and received 250 resumes. Just searching locally, however, doesn't attract enough quality applicants. Mackenzie recommended concentrating on the state GCSAA chapter, regional USGA agronomist and state golf association for names of "qualified" applicants.

- Tell potential candidates what is expected in terms of application materials — resumes, salary expectations, educational background, etc. Have candidates write a 500-word essay on why their experience matches the club's needs.

- Whittle down the entire pool of applicants to 10-15 candidates. Check references and conduct phone interviews with these individuals. A conference call with all members of the selection committee present works well at this stage. Following the phone interview, have each committee member rate the candidates on a scale of 1 to 10.

- Narrow this group down to three to five finalists. If possible, have a selection com-

mittee member visit each finalist's club for a tour and inspection. Invite each finalist for a personal interview at the club's expense. Prior to the interview, allow each finalist to visit with club staff to get a feel for the operation and prepare for the interview.

- Finalists should meet with one to three selection committee members at a time rather than the full committee all at once. Candidates should speak 80 percent of the time and the interviewers no more than 20 percent. During the interview, selection committee members should avoid first impressions and what-if questions; compare the candidates to the job description rather than to each other; use open-ended rather than yes/no questions; and provide the candidate a chance to ask questions.

- Once the committee reaches a consensus, make an offer to the top candidate. Don't tell the other candidates until the first choice officially accepts the position since no one wants to know they were actually the second or third choice.

"The most important thing is not to drop everything once a superintendent is hired," Mackenzie said. "The job description should become part of the performance review so that the superintendent knows what he needs to improve on and what he is doing well."

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