

BRIEFS

**TURLOCK GREENS REMODELED**

TURLOCK, Calif. — Remodeling of the greens has begun at Turlock Golf & Country Club under the design supervision of architect Andy Raugust. The back nine were scheduled to be completed by late February and ready for play in early spring. The club is using washed sod on the new USGA greens. Raugust will also remodel the front nine and that construction is scheduled for the fall.

BARBARON BUILDING PRACTICE FACILITY

OCALA, Fla. — Barbaron, Inc. of Crystal River has been selected to construct the new practice facility at Oak Run Country Club here. The facility will include a driving range with target greens and bunkering and will include chipping and putting areas and practice bunkers. Oak Run is owned by Decca Development & Construction Corp. of America.

MAKI BUSY ON TWO FRONTS

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Construction is underway on an 18-hole high-end daily-fee golf course here, serving as a cornerstone of a residential housing development. Fox Chase Plantation is the creation of developer James F. Day, while the course is being built by Bilberry Golf and designed by Lisa Maki of Golf Design Services International. The par-72 course will measure 7,100 from the back tees, Maki said. Meanwhile, Maki expects to begin work in April on Eagles Nest in Sacramento, Calif., south of the U.S. Air Force's Mather Field which closed last fall. Developed by the Takehara family of Japan, it will be an 18-hole stand-alone public facility, she said.

CHICAGO'S MR. GOLF HONORED

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Joe Jemsek, an octogenarian who pioneered public golf in Chicago and is known in that area as Mr. Golf, will be presented the William D. Richardson Award from the Golf Writers Association of America. The award is given for consistent outstanding contributions to golf. Jemsek owns and operates eight public courses in Chicago. Jemsek is a past Professional Golfer of the Year, chosen by the PGA of America, and has been inducted into the Chicago Sports Hall of Fame. The National Golf Foundation presented him its Herb Graffis Award in 1977 and his family its Jack Nicklaus Family Golf Award in 1991.



Joe Jemsek

Caribbean sings siren song

By PETER BLAIS

Caribbean golf resort/residential development is warming again after a relatively long cold spell, according to golf industry experts working the area.

Hurricane Hugo devastated certain islands in the late 1980s, denting the Caribbean's reputation as a safe and peaceful retreat, according to Ralph Stewart Bowden, a Virginia real estate counselor who has thoroughly researched the Caribbean market.

Just as the islands were recovering from that natural disaster, a financial calamity struck in the form of a worldwide recession. The financial downturn struck particularly hard and long at the northeast United States, historically the main source of Caribbean tourists and second-home buyers, Bowden noted.

Certain islands and island groups are recovering faster than others and looking at golf to help lead the way. Barbados and the Bahamas are two good examples.

Here's a look at the different regions and how golf is developing in those areas.

NETHERLAND ANTILLES/LESSER ANTILLES/WINDWARD ISLANDS

The real estate market has been relatively soft, but golf development fairly strong in the past year in these southernmost islands.

"There hasn't been much in the way of quality golf in the Caribbean, until recently" said architect Steve Schroeder of Robert Trent Jones II International. Jones designed Hyatt-operated Tierra del Sol, Aruba's first 18-

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Mexican woes only slow golf

By PETER BLAIS

Mexico's financial crisis may slow but certainly won't stop golf development there, according to industry experts working the area.

"The recent devaluation of the peso has brought most projects to a halt. That will continue until things settle out," said Joe Finger, a Texas-based course designer with five Mexican projects recently opened or planned.

"In the long term, the devaluation won't affect development that much. We had a similar devaluation 15 years ago and work eventually resumed."

The government devalued the

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The 4th hole at Joe Finger-designed Cabo Real

**Joe Finger still keeping a hand on design business**

QA &A

Joe Finger, 76, is a technologist at heart. Born in Texas, he obtained a bachelor's degree in engineering from Rice University and a master's from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He worked in the oil refining, plastic manufacturing and dairy businesses before designing his first course, a nine-hole addition to Houston's Westwood Country Club (CC),

back in 1956. Since then, he has designed and remodeled courses throughout the United States and notably Mexico [see story above]. The engineer's attention to detail demonstrated itself in his invention of the Percolometer, a device used for on-the-job control of seed-bed mixtures for greens. Priding himself on getting projects in on time and on budget, he also wrote one of the first books dealing with the costs of course design, "The Business End of Building or Rebuilding a Golf Course," in 1973

Golf Course News: You supposedly retired from active design work in 1990. What have you been doing since?

Joe Finger: Working my rear end off. I've built two courses in Mexico, have two more on the drawing board and one up in the air. We remodeled the greens at Cedar Ridge in Tulsa [Okla.] and Colonial Country Club in Memphis [Tenn.] We're doing a long-range plan for Pleasant Valley CC in Little Rock [Ark.], which we built for Winthrop Rockefeller 27 years ago. We also did consulting work on the Napa Valley (Calif.) CC clubhouse. I'm doing a lot of gardening and orcharding at home and working for the club [River Hill]. Byron Nelson and I built River Hill back in 1974 and we both have homes

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UNEARTHED!**Mackenzie's mysterious manuscript**

By TERRY BUCHEN

BOULDER, Colo. — Raymund Haddock, the step-grandson of Dr. Alister Mackenzie, is a successful insurance agent here. Little did he know that his life was going to change dramatically with the discovery of an item stored for years in a cedar chest in his home.

The story begins in 1978 when course architect Geoffrey S. Cornish and writer Ron Whitten were researching their book, "The Golf Course," and discovered in Dr. Mackenzie's obituary that he had written a manuscript shortly before his death but that it had never been published. Whitten called Charles Scribner and Sons in New York, inquired about the unpublished work and was told it had "long since been destroyed!" An unfortunate dead-end, to say the least.

In 1982 Robert Trent Jones Sr. told Whitten he had a typed version of the lost manuscript which he had given to the legendary Red Hoffman. Whitten called Hoffman, who insisted that he no longer had the manuscript and had returned it to Trent Jones. But Jones insisted that Hoffman still had it, and it was never to be seen again. Another dead-end.

Fast-forward 10 years to 1992. The Mackenzie Cup was being played between four 10-man teams representing Cypress Point, Meadow Club, Green Hills, Pasatiempo, The Valley Club and Crystal Downs. At a gathering in the garden of Mackenzie's house along the 6th fairway at Pasatiempo, Whitten told the golfers that 60 years later it was difficult to research Mackenzie. In particular, he was

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Dr. Alister Mackenzie

Photo courtesy of "The Spirit of St. Andrews"

Discouraged but not 'down and out' in Mexico

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peso roughly 40 percent in mid-January, making imports of American-made maintenance and construction equipment more expensive and bringing development virtually to a stop.

"It hasn't discouraged development interest in Mexico," said Andy O'Brien of Jack Nicklaus Golf Services, which has opened three Mexican projects and has a fourth in planning. "They may modify the way they finance projects, but we haven't seen a noticeable change. It's still a real active market."

Don Rhodes of NationsBank said Mexico's financial plight is a reminder of the difficulty traditional lenders have making deals in developing countries.

"It's almost impossible to get a first mortgage on a property because of the fear officials have of foreigners coming in and taking over prime property if the borrower should default," Rhodes said. "About the only way for a U.S. lender to get involved in Mexico is through a joint venture agreement with the lender basically putting up a few million dollars to set up some native Mexicans in business."

"The only way you would do something like that is if you were interested in making a long-term commitment to a country. U.S. investors were already waiting to see if the NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] rules would stabilize the investment climate in Mexico. This recent financial setback will just make investors rethink any long-term investments."

Mexican golf course development has experienced steady growth in recent years. There are approximately 150 golf courses in the country with eight opening in 1994, according to Mexican Golf Federation figures. Americans will get a look at one of the finest, Cabo del Sol, when the year-old Nicklaus layout on the southern tip of the Baja peninsula hosts the Senior Tour's Grand Slam March 6-7.

But, that yearly growth figure will be tough to duplicate in 1995 considering the peso's fall, said Victor Frangie of the Mexico Golf Association.

"Everything has come to a stop," he said.

Frangie and Finger are confident about the long-term future, however. "I foresee a steady rate of eight to 10 courses a year once the peso shock subsides," the American said.

In recent years, Finger said, two types of courses were being built — resort and residential development. The devalued peso will affect each differently.

Resorts depend on Northern visitors and U.S. dollars for much of their business. The devalued

peso will make Mexican resorts less expensive for Americans to visit and should increase revenues. But that may not translate into additional courses, Finger said.

"The west coast is saturated with resorts," he said, "and the federal government can't afford the infrastructure to build more. Puerto Vallarta, for instance, has way too many hotels. There are five courses in Baja, Calif. I have

two, Nicklaus two and Roy Dye one. But I don't think there's enough water for the five of them."

"The east coast has room for some additional development, like Cozumel and the Yucatan. But the east is less popular because the lack of sea breezes makes it hotter and more humid than the west."

On the other hand, Finger sees a growing demand for residential development courses, particularly in suburban cities surrounding Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey.

"One of the most maddening

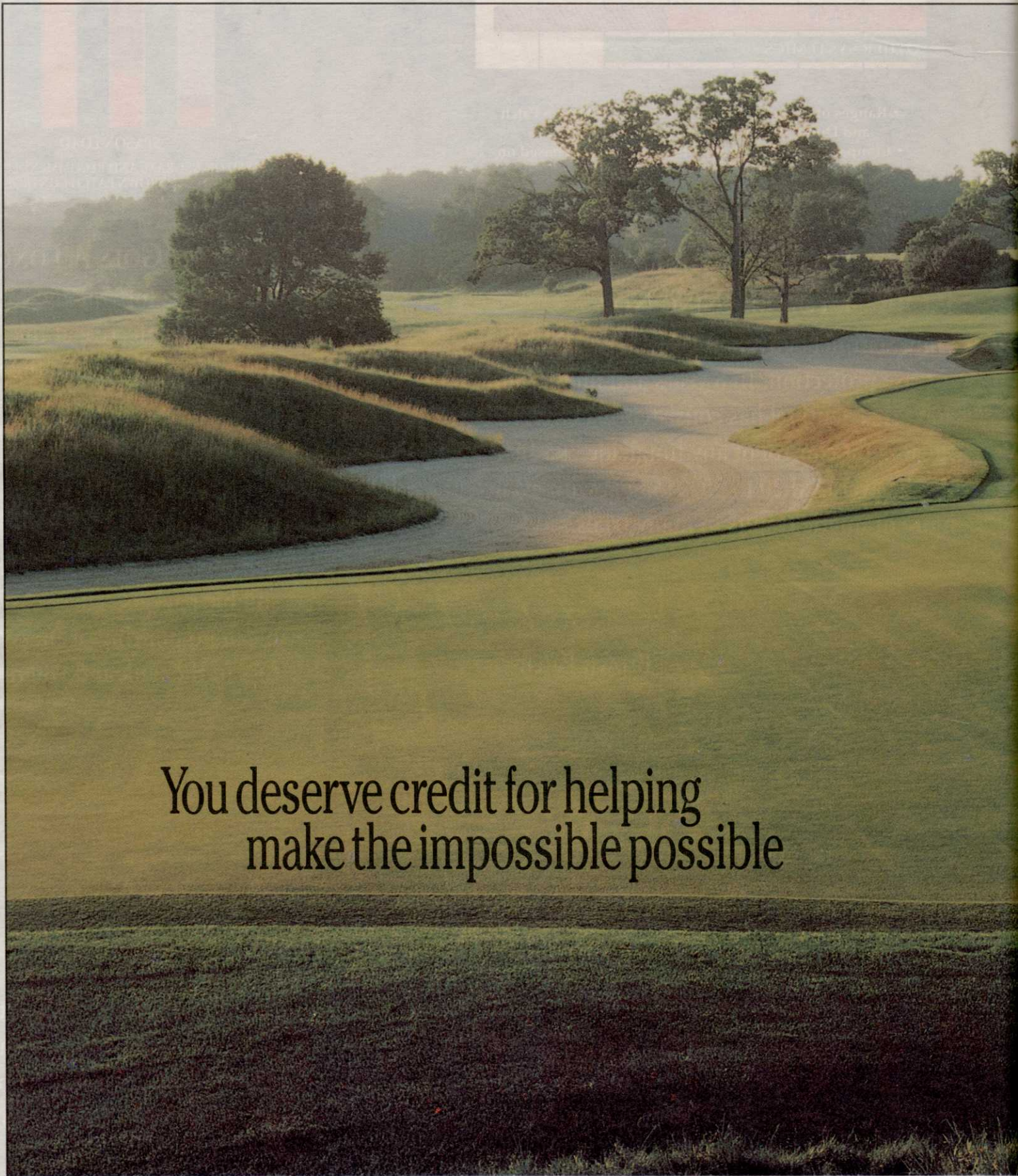
things for me is the way the press depicts Mexico," Finger said. "It is not a Third World country with a few very rich and a bunch of very poor people. It has steel and car manufacturers. And there's a growing middle class of doctors, lawyers, architects and business owners."

"But the big cities are very polluted. Many are on high plateaus and don't have winds to clear out the smog. People are fleeing the inner cities and are willing to move an hour's drive away. Some think two hours is even better. It's not unusual for a father to work in the city

and live in an apartment during the week, then commute the two hours back home on the weekend

"Queretaro is a two-hour drive from Mexico City and already has four courses. Cuernavaca and other areas south of Mexico City are being developed. So is Toluca and beyond to the west. Mexican engineers and contractors are great at building new highways quickly so that commuters can reach those areas."

What is most needed in Mexico, Finger added, is low-cost municipal courses.



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