

Colorado Springs golf pro cleared of vandalism charge

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — For the second time in three months, assistant golf pro Chris Pratz has been cleared of charges of attempted malicious mischief for spreading baking soda on a green at the city's Patty Jewett Golf Course and killing the grass.

Pratz, 27, had told detectives, reporters and others that on Aug. 30, 1993, he poured baking soda on one of the greens at the golf course. City officials have said there was damage on three different greens which cost about \$3,000 to repair.

But 4th Judicial District Judge Donald Campbell ordered the charges dropped because of a lack of evidence. Campbell said the damage to the greens could have been caused naturally by poor-quality irrigation water and existing soil conditions. Police, including a seasoned homicide detective who was assigned to the case, also had no evidence that Pratz had poured baking soda on more than one green.

The charges against Pratz were part of an ongoing storm of criticism and controversy about playing conditions at the city course. Several greens were either dead or dying on the course last spring and golfers accused the city of mismanagement and incompetence. The city, irate over Pratz's initial admission that he had tried to damage at least

one green and frustrated with the condition of the course, has said it will pursue the matter in criminal or civil court.

Paul Butcher, city parks and recreation director, said the damaged greens — which led to golfers going elsewhere — caused losses "in the tens of thousands of dollars." About 187,000 rounds are played on the course annually generating \$1.2 million in revenue.

'Polar' Bear eyes project in Alaskan capital

JUNEAU, Alaska — Jack Nicklaus could be mixing golf course design and salmon fishing very soon.

The Nicklaus Design group's proposal for an 18-hole golf course and adjacent residential development has been judged the frontrunner for municipal land on North Douglas.

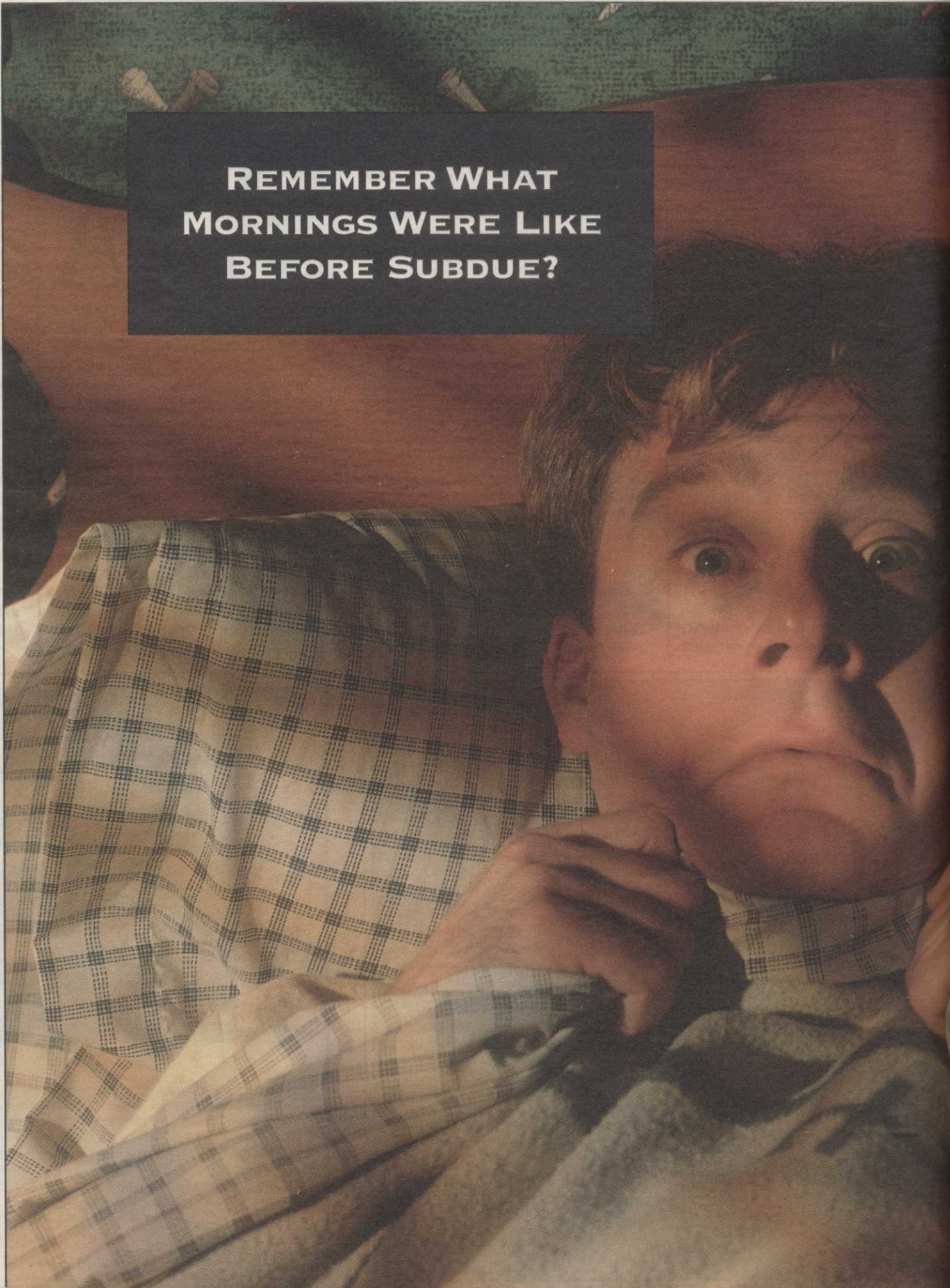
City staff has recommended selling the land to developer Richard Holden. Holden and his partners in Waterfront Park Hotel Corp. have offered a minimum of \$2.3 million for 320 acres of land and the timber on it. Holden said he has secured \$8.5 million in financing for the land

and development of the Eagle Tree Golf Course and a 4,000-square-foot log clubhouse.

The golf course would be built in two phases, with the first nine holes available for play in early 1996 and the second nine holes ready for spring 1997. The proposed 74 housing units would be built over a three-year period.

Nicklaus is interested in designing and building the golf course, according to Timothy Kenny, vice president for the North Palm Beach, Fla.-based company.

The Juneau project would be the northernmost Nicklaus design.



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Second-class postage paid at Yarmouth, Maine, and additional mailing office. *Golf Course News* (ISSN 1054-0644) is published monthly by United Publications, Inc., 38 Lafayette St., P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096. Phone number is 207-846-0600.

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