

## BRIEFS

**PALMER TAKES OVER UNIVERSITY RIDGE**

MADISON, Wis. — University Ridge Golf Course at the University of Wisconsin has selected Arnold Palmer Golf Management Co. to operate the facility. Rated among the top 10 university courses in the country, University Ridge hosted the Big Ten Golf Championship and will be the site of the NCAA Womens Championship in 1977.

**KSL ACQUIRES 4TH FLA. LAYOUT**

NAVARRE, Fla. — KSL Fairways has acquired The Club at Hidden Creek, giving the Virginia-based firm four courses in the Florida Panhandle including Tiger Point Golf & Country Club, Scenic Hills Country Club and Shalimar Pointe Golf & Country Club. KSL Fairways plans \$250,000 in improvements to The Club at Hidden Creek.

**JACOBS, FAIRFIELD HOMES TEAM UP**

GREEN VALLEY, Ariz. — Jacobs Golf Group and Fairfield Homes, both of Scottsdale, have entered a joint agreement to own and manage the Arthur Hills-designed San Ignacio Golf Club here. Immediate plans call for golf course improvements to help playability, doubling the size of the driving range and other practice facilities.

**NORTH AMERICAN GOLF ADDS TWO**

LOMBARD, Ill. — North American Golf (NAG) has assumed management responsibility for a pair of golf courses, according to company President Michael Rippey. The courses are Glendale Lakes Golf Club in Glendale Heights, Ill., and the Governor's Club in Chapel Hill, N.C. NAG manages eight courses nationwide.



Michael Rippey

**BRASSIE EXPANDS BY 3**

TAMPA, Fla. — Brassie Golf Corp. has added three new properties to its management portfolio — Village at Sands Point in Sands Point, N.Y.; Panama Country Club in Panama City, Fla.; and Riviera Country Club in Dublin, Ohio. Brassie has added eight new properties since last fall's merger with COPM.

**CHANTILLY HIRES CASPER**

RISING SUN, Md. — Chantilly Manor Country Club has hired Billy Casper Golf Management to provide marketing consultation services for the 18-hole course, which recently converted from private to semiprivate status.

## Discount rounds program unveiled

EPI marketing excess capacity at courses

By PETER BLAIS

TROY, Mich. — The world's largest publisher of consumer discount programs is set to offer a new program designed to help daily-fee courses market their excess capacity.

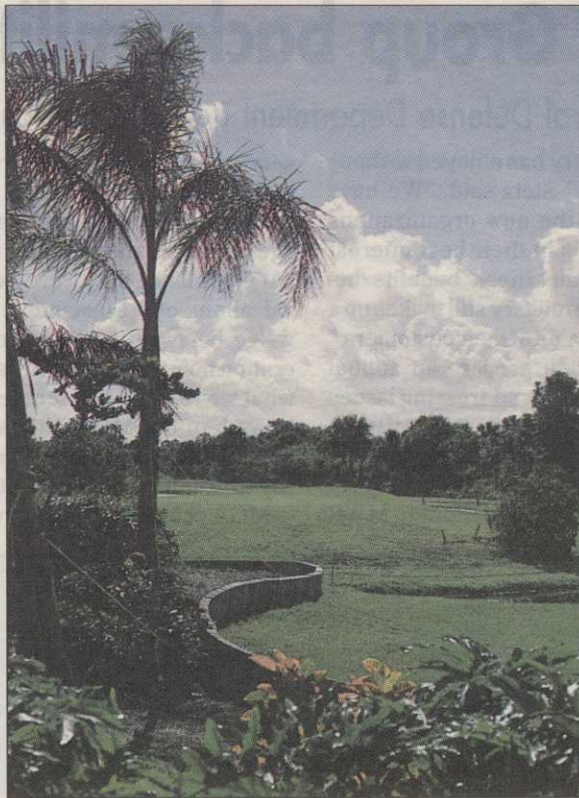
Beginning in 1996, Entertainment Publications Inc.'s Golf Program will begin publishing a National Golf Directory. The 2,000 courses

expected to be listed in the directory will provide a "Buy-One-Get-One-Round-Free" offer to Entertainment Publication's various travel club members. Some weekend and seasonal restrictions may apply and clubs may require golfers to rent carts.

The Golf Directory will be included in packets of information provided by Entertainment membership travel club clients like AMOCO MultiCard Travel Club, Exxon Travel Club and Sears Discount Travel Club. Members of those clubs take an average of 7.2 trips every year and 33 percent of them play golf, according to company figures.

"What you have is many national corporations using their money to promote golf at these courses," said Golf Program Director Bob McHenry. "We're looking for golf courses that are interested in generating more business, especially during their down times."

Established in 1962, Entertainment develops, distributes and promotes numerous publications containing discounts on lodging, dining, travel, sports and other leisure activities, including golf. Over 100,000 participating merchants are under contract. The company has 900 em-



Turtle Creek Golf Club in Rockledge, Fla.

ployees staffing its Troy headquarters and 85 local offices. Entertainment Publications Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of CUC International, a public company traded on the New York Stock Exchange.

"It's worked surprisingly well," said Scott Hutchinson, head pro at Turtle Creek Golf Club in Rockledge, Fla. "We were first listed in one of their publications back in November and within two days people were redeeming coupons. That's surprising considering how many discount books are available in Florida."

"The nice thing is that the coupons bring in two golfers. The first golfer pays full price and the second one just pays for a cart. We don't have any time, day or seasonal restrictions on the coupon's use."

The new golf directory is similar to the 4-by-8 1/2-inch hotel directory the company has published for many years. It will contain a limited number of sporting goods, dining and hotel listings, but will be primarily devoted to golf. It should be available by this spring, McHenry said.

The agreement between Entertainment International and the course requires

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## Friels become major players in New England

*'I'm enthralled by the joy public golfers exhibit on the course. To walk into the clubhouse at 4:30 a.m. and see people already there waiting to get out and play is a real thrill.'*

— Phil Friel

By PETER BLAIS

Golf has been a part of Phil Friel's life for 71 of his 80 years, and as the above suggests, it still gives the patriarch of the Friel organization a charge.

Friel and his sons — Phil Jr., David and Tom — own 10 public courses in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine. He visits the courses daily, puts in significant time at the company's Nashua, N.H., office and still shoots in the low 70s, a reflection of his 55 years as a teaching pro and seven PGA National Championship appearances.

Friel began playing and caddying at Woburn (Mass.) Country Club at age nine, rising through the ranks to caddymaster, assistant pro and head professional. World War II and the Army called him away for several years before he returned to New England where he became head pro at Nashua Country Club.

"I loved teaching, but I was always looking for land," said Friel, who, like many club pros, dreamed of one day building his own course. "There isn't much longevity in this business for golf pros. I wanted something with a little more stability."

The opportunity presented itself in the late 1950s. With the help of a friend who oversaw a trust fund, Friel purchased some farm land in



Phil Friel

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## Golf Enterprises Inc. reportedly for sale

DALLAS — Golf Enterprises Inc. (GEI) is engaged in preliminary discussions with a potential buyer concerning the sale of the company for cash and securities totaling \$12 per share of GEI common stock, according to a company statement.

GEI is a Dallas-based national operator of public, private and resort courses. The company owns, leases or contracts to 43 courses in 17 states.

Discussions were preliminary and it was impossible to say whether or when a definitive merger agreement would take place.

Meanwhile, GEI is moving forward in its efforts to increase its portfolio. The company recently purchased the leasehold interest and other assets used in connection with the operation of two existing courses located at the Lely Resort and Country Club in Naples, Fla. GEI will lease the Lely Flamingo Island Club and the Classic at Lely Resort layouts.

**MANAGEMENT COMPANY UPDATE**

Gainey Ranch in Scottsdale, Ariz., is a recent addition to the ClubCorp portfolio. For a look at other management companies and their new courses turn to page 80.



## Phil Friel

Continued from page 73

nearby Hudson and went to work on Green Meadow.

"Banks and golf had a bad relationship going back to the Depression when the banks had to take back many properties," said Friel, who designed and built Green Meadow himself. "So you had to look elsewhere for financing."

"There were basically no courses built in New England between 1930 and 1955. Green Meadow was one of the few and was the first in the area with a fairway watering system. That was a major change. People played on burnt fairways in New England for years and didn't really think much about it. It was a game of beautiful greens with little attention paid to fairways."

The first 18 at Green Meadow opened in 1960. It was so successful that he added another 18 in 1967. "But there was really no reason to build after that," he said. "It took a long time before the market made it worthwhile again."

Part of the disincentive to build came from farmers and the government, Friel remembered. To reduce agricultural production, the federal government started paying farmers subsidies to convert their land to other uses, like golf.

"We were basically competing with the government," Friel remembered. "It just didn't make sense for a private golf developer to build around here."

But what did start to make sense to the entrepreneur in Friel was to begin buying financially-troubled courses that, with some investment, could become outstanding layouts. The first was the Country Club of New Hampshire in North Sutton. After being approached several times at successfully lower prices, Friel finally purchased the club. "A diamond in the rough," is how Friel described the original Wayne Stiles/John Van Kleeck design that was later remodeled and added to by William Mitchell.

"It was a good deal for someone already in the business," Friel said. "It needed a new watering system and someone to fix up the greens. My sons thought I was crazy when I told them it was potentially the best layout in New Hampshire. A year later they were telling me it was the best layout in the state."

In 1983, the family bought Cape Cod Country Club in North Falmouth, Mass.

But soon, the Friels got back to their first love, designing and building their own courses. First came son David's Overlook (1990) in

*'It just didn't make sense for a private golf developer to build around here.'*

— Phil Friel

Hollis, N.H., and later Phil's Souhegan Woods (1992) in Hudson.

"Overlook was supposed to be a private club," Phil remembered. "But it was obvious with the downturn in the economy that we weren't going to get enough members to make it fly. So we went public and it's done very well."

The potholes in New England's rough economic road claimed several other courses the Friels were able to pick up at bargain-basement prices — Sable Oaks in Portland, Maine; White Mountain Country Club in Ashland, N.H.; Whip-Poor-Will in Hudson; and Pheasant Ridge in Gilford, N.H.

"We began looking around

again because there were a lot of courses on the market that were selling for well below what it would have cost us to build them," Friel said. "We run them all as public courses because we believe that's where the game's growth will be. The highest green fee we charge is \$32 at Overlook."

Part of the reason Friel has been able to hold green fees down is that he has always designed his courses with maintenance in mind. "The more grass you can cut with big equipment, the better," he said.

That big equipment includes

3-gang riding greens mowers and 5-gang riding fairway mowers, machines Friel calls the major technological breakthroughs of the past 35 years in helping course managers deal with today's demands for top-quality maintenance on a daily basis.

"You can cut all 18 greens in two hours with a single riding greens mower," Friel said. "We have two at each course so we can start early and stay ahead of the players. We also have fairway units at each course so we can stripe the courses diagonally."

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