

GOLF COURSE NEWS

New Course Listing
See page 52

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INSIDE

Builders' Market

If current construction figures are any indication, more than 500 courses should open this year 3

Agronomic Q&A

In a new feature, *GCN* poses the questions; university researchers provide the answers 15

Fighting Pond Scum

Ozone systems and bacteria can help overcome every superintendent's aquatic nightmare 39



BLAST FROM THE PAST

Donald Ross, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, relates his thoughts on golfers and design during the 50th meeting of the ASGCA. Complete coverage begins on page 43.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

Job market strong for golf course mechanics 11
Bermudagrass cultivars on the ropes? 15
Complete listing of golf industry web sites 30,31

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Old automobile tires play a role in irrigation 5
Q&A with globetrotting Ron Fream 43
Real Golf, Olson busy in Haiphong, Fullerton 51

COURSE MANAGEMENT

Maryland family battles elements, government 53
Brassie looks to increase profits 54
Former NGCOA president forms consultancy 55

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Lofts Seed sold to North Carolina distributor 59
biosys acquires AgriDyne Technologies 60
Barenbrug purchases national reach 61

More graduates chasing fewer jobs?

Assistant positions plentiful; head jobs in short supply

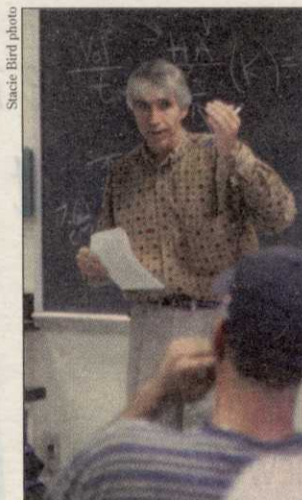
By PETER BLAIS

The demand for assistant superintendents remains strong, which bodes well for the turf school students set to graduate this spring who will fill many of those positions. However, even in the face of a record 468 new course openings in 1995, making the leap from assistant to head superintendent or retaining the top maintenance post remains a challenging proposition.

"We have heard about many more assistant jobs than we have graduates to fill them," said John 'Trey' Rogers, associate professor at Michigan State University. "The only people who seem to be having problems are those who have restricted themselves to a certain geographic area."

Faculty at Ohio State and Pennsylvania State universities echoed Rogers' senti-

Continued on page 21



PSU's Dr. Charles Mancino, asst. professor of turfgrass science.

TURF SCHOOL REPORT

- How's the job market for mechanics? p. 11
- Complete listing of 2-year & 4-year turf programs, p. 20

As turf grads grow in number, so do worries of saturation

By J. BARRY MOTHES

The number of graduates from collegiate turfgrass programs this year will again be higher than last year. That, along with an increase in two-year degree and certificate programs, has fueled a strong perception there may be too many turfgrass graduates heading into the job market.

"I think there might be a bit of an overload," said William Torello, a professor of turfgrass management at the University of Massachusetts for the past 15 years. "I think there is a saturation level and I think we're real near it — if not at it."

"But almost 100 percent of our people do get placed. They may not all be assistant superintendents right away, but they get work. The golf course industry is certainly becoming loaded with trained people."

The Golf Course Superintendents As-

Continued on page 23

New player emerges in group buying

By LOU PRATO

ELLCOTT CITY, Md.— A new nationwide buying cooperative aimed at getting major price breaks for golf course owners and superintendents on everything from chemicals to maintenance equipment is seeking its first charter members in the East.

National Turf Cooperative, Inc. (NTC), based here near Baltimore, expects to have at least 250 members signed up when it starts buying seeds, fertilizer, and other such goods from manufacturers and suppliers in October of 1996. NTC will concentrate initially on buying products necessary for the development and maintenance of golf courses.

Continued on page 27



Temporary clubhouses don't have to be unsightly trailers sitting starkly in parking lots. To wit, this clubhouse facility at Hamilton Golf Club in Fishers, Ind.

Pre-fab clubhouses keep priorities on course

By PETER BLAIS

Golf developers are heeding the advice of course designers and installing temporary clubhouses, allowing the course to establish a reputation and generate revenue before building a first-class clubhouse facility. While the idea might seem a bit self serving since course architects are paid for the course they design rather than the clubhouse that borders it, few would argue that it is the course rather than the clubhouse that first attracts players to a golf facility.

"Getting the course right and waiting on the permanent clubhouse is a con-

cept I endorse," said course architect David Horn of Architerra PC, a course design firm in Catasauqua, Pa. "You can get a good, prefab clubhouse for \$100,000 or less to get you through the first few years until the cash flow is sufficient to build a permanent one."

In fact, if done right, a prefab clubhouse can be attractive and may suffice much longer than a developer may initially think. Horn said he has sent many clients to see the supposedly temporary facility at Center Valley (Pa.) Club just south of Bethlehem, Pa.

Geoffrey Cornish-designed Center

Continued on page 57

Buena Vista adds new California track

CAMARILLO, Calif. — Buena Vista Golf Holdings (BVGH), a recently formed joint venture of Buena Vista Hospitality Group of Tampa, Fla., and Hanover Capital Holdings Corp. of New York, has acquired Spanish Hills Golf & Country Club here. Private Spanish Hills opened in 1993 featuring an 18-hole Robert Cupp course.

BVGH was formed in early April. The firm specializes in the acquisition, ownership and operation of golf properties. Buena Vista Hospitality Group is a real-estate and hospitality management company, while Hanover Capital is a real-estate investment and merchant banking firm.

Buena Vista also manages Buena Vista Palace Resort & Spa at Walt Disney World Village, Fla.; PGA National Resort & Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.; Lodge & Bath Club at Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.; LPGA International in Daytona Beach, Fla.; Steele Canyon Golf & Country Club in San Diego; and WestWinds Golf & Country Club in Newmarket, Md.

Prefab clubhouses

Continued from page 1

Valley opened for play in June 1992, according to Director of Golf Larry Wise. The developers leased three 14'-by-40' modular units from a Philadelphia firm (GE Capital) and arranged them in a U-shape. They placed the units on footers and cabled them down to make certain they stayed in place. They landscaped extensively inside and out and built pitched, wooden roofs over each.

On the inside of the U, they built a 40'-by-60' patio and covered it with a framed tent. The tented area contains an outside restaurant that seats 110, allowing it to accommodate almost any outing plus regular diners. The tent is lighted, music is piped in and intercoms keep golfers informed about what is happening on the course. At the entrance to the tent, the developers added a wooden structure and fan system housing a barbecue area where pig roasts and ribs are cooked. A bar next to the cookery handles drink orders.

"We've had an excellent response from our customers," Wise said. "The only down side is that we might have missed out on a few major corporate outings or entertaining some upscale clients. But we wanted to get the course accepted and operating. It's definitely helped us establish the course as one of the best in the area."

The green fees at Central Valley are

\$48.75 weekdays and \$56.50 weekends. "The fact that we have a supposedly temporary clubhouse hasn't affected rounds or green fees at all," Wise said.

In fact, there is really nothing temporary about the Central Valley facility, according to Wise. The club purchased the units for about \$250,000 shortly after they were installed and plans on using them as the main clubhouse for at least three more years. Once a stick-built clubhouse is erected — that Wise estimates will cost \$2 million — the prefab units will still host outings.

Another advantage of prefab clubhouses is that they give developers the opportunity to see what type of amenities their customers prefer before actually committing millions of dollars to a permanent clubhouse with facilities that could go unused, according to Robert Harper, director of golf at Wild Wing Plantation.

"A temporary clubhouse gives you a barometer of the type of guests you have so that you won't jump in and spend money on things they won't use, anyway," said Harper, who also worked out of temporary facilities at Tournament Player Club courses in Memphis, Tenn., and Miami.

Wild Wing leased two double wides for nine months when it first opened back in 1991, Harper said. The club dressed them up with landscaping and outside decking before erecting a permanent, 33,000-square-foot facility.

"Ours were color-coordinated and very

well done," Harper remembered of the units the club rented from Space Master of Charlotte, S.C. for approximately \$900 per month per unit. "By the time they were in the ground, you couldn't even tell they were temporaries. That's important because that first impression is often a lasting one. As soon as we were done with them they were on the road to another new club down in Florida."

Some companies are trying to take the word "temporary" out of the prefab clubhouse business altogether. Commercial Structures of Nappanee, Ind., custom designs, manufactures and installs modular clubhouses that can be leased or purchased, according to company Vice President Eric Johnson.

They are built to the same BOCA codes as stick-built structures and generally range in price from \$30 to \$45 per square foot, well below the cost of traditional clubhouses, Johnson said. They are designed so that more space can be added on at a later date.

"Developers usually go this route because they see it as a quick fix," Johnson explained. "But they are finding they can keep them as permanent structures once the landscaping is done. We can also do the drawings and construction in a matter of four to six weeks compared to several months for a regular clubhouse. We see the prefab clubhouse market as a niche we'd like to develop."

NATIONS CREDIT

A NationsBank Company

Golf and Recreational Finance

is proud to announce it has closed the following transactions since its inception in late 1994.

\$7,000,000 - NORTHGATE COUNTRY CLUB, Houston, TX
Refinance an 18-hole private course.

\$3,400,000 - THE LINKS GROUP, Myrtle Beach, SC
Refinance leases on 144 holes of golf plus a credit line for future acquisitions.

\$11,500,000 - THE LODGE OF FOUR SEASONS, Lake of the Ozarks, MO
Refinance a 311-room lodge, 211-slip marina and 45 holes of golf.

\$5,000,000 - KEMPER SPORTS MANAGEMENT, Chicago, IL

\$2,250,000 - OLDE POINT GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB, Wilmington, NC
Refinance 18-hole course plus construction funding for clubhouse expansion.

\$2,500,000 - GEORGETOWN COUNTRY CLUB, Georgetown, MA
Refinance a 9-hole public course plus construction funds for additional 9 holes.

\$3,500,000 - THE SEA RANCH GOLF LINKS, Sea Ranch, CA
Refinance a 9-hole public course plus construction for a second nine holes.

\$2,400,000 - WHITTIER GC & VICTORIA GC, Los Angeles, CA
Refinance two 18-hole public courses.

\$5,000,000 - THE BEACH CLUB GOLF LINKS, Ocean City, MD
Refinance an 18-hole course and construction financing of new 18-hole course.

\$3,600,000 - THE HERITAGE GOLF CLUB, Atlanta, GA
Construction of an 18-hole course and a line of credit for new acquisitions.

\$5,200,000 - AVILA BEACH RESORT, San Luis Obispo, CA
Refinance an 18-hole resort golf course.

\$4,750,000 - CRYSTAL SPRINGS GC, Sussex Co., NJ
Refinance an existing course to draw out equity to construct a new course.

\$3,250,000 - BLACK BEAR GC, Sussex Co., NJ

Construction of a new 18-hole course, cross-collateralized with Crystal Springs.

\$3,800,000 - CHESTNUT HILL & DEERFIELD GC, Buffalo/Rochester, NY
Refinance 18-hole course and acquisition of 27-hole course.

\$8,500,000 - ANGEL FIRE RESORT, near Taos, NM

Acquisition of a ski mountain, golf course, hotel, RV park & other amenities.

\$9,500,000 - GOLF CLUB of ILLINOIS & BURR HILL GC, Chicago, IL
Refinance GCI, acquire Burr Hill and provide a line for future acquisitions.

\$7,000,000 - ELY BOWLING, Northern NJ
Refinance 4 bowling centers in northern NJ and southwestern NY.

\$6,700,000 - BADLANDS GC, Las Vegas, NV
Take-out of course construction loan, plus provide for clubhouse construction.

\$2,600,000 - CASSELBERRY GC, Orlando, FL
Construction loan for new daily fee course.

\$3,600,000 - SOUTH RIDING GC, Washington, DC
Construction loan for new daily fee course.

\$2,800,000 - GREEN ACRES LANES, Lake Worth, FL
Acquisition loan for 60 lane bowling center.

\$2,500,000 - SHATTUCK GC, Jaffrey, NH
Acquisition loan for existing daily fee course.

\$3,500,000 - RANCHO VISTOSO GC, Tucson, AZ
Permanent mortgage to take-out course construction loan.

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