GOLF COURSE

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION VOLUME 9, NUMBER 3 MARCH 1997 • \$5.50



Mission Accomplished, Again

GCSAA Show Review



NEW PARTNERS

Architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan (right) has asked longtime associate Dana Fry to join him in his growing Columbus, Ohio, practice. For story, see page 44.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

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COURSE MANAGEMENT

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SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Fearis joins GCSAA order of ascension

By PETER BLAIS

LAS VEGAS — Blue Hills Country Club's David Fearis, 50,

was elected GCSAA secretary/treasurer at the recent annual board of directors election here, meaning the Kansas City (Mo.) superintendent will eventually succeed new President Paul McGinnis and Vice President George Renault as leader of the national superintendents' organization.

The membership also voted in favor of a \$40 dues increase to \$250 for head superintendents (\$125 for assistants), but rejected a proposed bylaw amendment that would have created a new classification (C-V) for career assistant superintendents who would receive the right to vote at annual elections.

Fearis, a 29-year GCSAA member who has served on the board since 1993, bested R. Scott Woodhead, Continued on page 39

Palmer Mgmt. moves toward franchising

By PETER BLAIS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Arnold Palmer Golf Management Co. has unveiled a franchise program that allows course owners to use the Palmer name and proprietary operating systems, but permits course owners to continue operating their golf facilities themselves.

"No one has provided management services to people who want to continue running their own courses, until now," said Palmer Chief Marketing Officer Joseph Redling. "We created this system specifically for them."

In exchange for an undisclosed annual franchise Continued on page 58





Policy-makers hold key to development

By MARK LESLIE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The country's hotly debated wetlands policies are in turmoil following contradictory developments issued in the early days of 1997: First, Nation Wide Permits for wetlands were tightened, then a court ruling weakened regulations limiting excavation of marshes and swamps.

According to experts, this upheaval may continue for the next two years, until the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Army Corps of Engineers install a new set of Nation Wide Permits (NWPs). Golf course developers and others are now dealing with two major changes:

• A revised NWP 26 [GCN, January '97], which reduces the number of acres a project can affect. In the past, a developer could impact 1 to 10 acres of isolated wetlands or stream headwaters. One acre could be affected without seeking permits. Under the new rules, permits are required for any impact of more than 1/3 of an acre. The 10-acre maximum of wetlands that could be affected has been cut to 3 acres

• U.S. District Court Judge Stanley S. Harris, who ruled here on Jan. 23, has thrown out the "Tulloch Continued on page 52



DELICATE WORK AT GLEN DORNOCH

Architect Clyde Johnston has unveiled the newest addition to South Carolina's Grand Strand. At Glen Dornoch Waterway Golf Links, now open for play in Little River, Johnston employed 26,000 feet of silt fence to secure the surrounding wetlands and waterfronts from construction activities. For the story on this and other Johnston projects, see page 49.

Factory stores meet market-specific needs

By HAL PHILLIPS

DALLAS — Factory stores here in the competitive Texas golf course market have shown how much distribution has changed, while simultaneously re-emphasizing the importance of independent distribution to the selling process.

Citing loss of market share, The Bloomington, Minn.-based Toro Co. has opened three factory stores serving the Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio markets. One of Toro's major competitors — Racine, Wis.-based Jacobsen Division of Textron — has also opened a factory store here in Dallas. Yet executives at both firms are careful to point out that market-specific factors — not a loss of faith in traditional distribution channels — have prompted creation of these factory stores.

"This is not a trend," said Eddie Clark, who manages Professional Turf Products, Toro's three-pronged Texas distribution operation. "Toro's expertise is manufacturing and marketing. Distribution is the facilitator that Toro uses to take its products to market. We had lost quite a bit of market share here, so we decided we had to make a transition."

Had ground been broken today on Gary Player's Floridian in Stuart, Fla., the project would be subject to far stricter wetlands permitting.

Factory stores

Continued from page 1

Jacobsen has not limited its direct-marketing approach to Dallas. According to Division President Phil Tralies, the firm operates similar ventures in Southern California, Atlanta and Charlotte, N.C., with satellite operations in Palm Springs and San Diego, Calif., and Myrtle Beach, S.C.

"It's not that we chose this route," Tralies explained, "but we're looking out for the customer. We've got to make sure we offer the high standards of sales and service associated with Jacobsen.

"In the Carolinas, for example, we researched a number of different alternatives but we weren't happy with the potential candidates, their knowledge of the market or their commitment to the customer. To be in the forefront, we had to put a branch in there."

Distribution of turf-related products has never been a model of market stability. Manufacturer relationships can affect product lines. Loyal superintendents move out of state and take their business with them. Margins ebb and flow as manufacturers tweak their own marketing approaches.

Yet the past few years have brought unprecedented upheaval, as large distribution houses have absorbed smaller ones and an increasing number of golf industry firms have taken a factory-direct sales approach.

Yet Tom Walker isn't worried. As owner of Outdoor Equipment, a large distributor operating from six locations in Missouri, Kansas and Illinois, Walker is confident that distributors will never outlive their utility.

"I think some manufacturers are trying to cut corners," Walker said, "but there are many functions a distributor can do that a manufacturer isn't so good at: service, interfacing a salesperson with the customer, personal product recommendation, delivery. That will never change. Why hasn't the automobile industry gone factory direct? Because they can't do it efficiently.

"With Toro in Texas, they saw the consumer was not getting what he wanted. So they've made a change."

Before last year's change, Goldthwaite's of Texas, Inc. had handled the Toro line for 68 years. William D. Read, chairman of the board at Goldthwaite's, has a different view of Toro's decision to go direct.

"It was the basic obsolescence of the inventory," Read explained. "Having to buy a year or more of inventory in advance, and then having to pay extreme interest rates imposed by the factory on that inventory, simply didn't make it profitable. It had been a good relationship for 60odd years, but basically we could see that maintaining profitabil-

ity would be very difficult. "Also a big part of the

"Also, a big part of the decision was Toro's plan to pull all consumer parts away from distribution and go direct. The parts business was very profitable.

Goldthwaite's now carries the Howard Price rotary mower line, Turfco products and Legacy irrigation — but no bitterness, said Read: "All in all, it was a mutual agreement. They go their way and we go ours. Both sides parted amicably."

Walker noted that starting a

distribution center is no simple task. It requires a huge capital investment, "and those people are not falling off trees. That's what's happened in Dallas. They had to go in there and open a factory store."

Toro has made one thing very clear in Texas: The factory store situation is not permanent. As soon as a qualified local interest emerges, Toro will strongly consider selling its storefronts to a private concern, said Clark, who noted Toro's interim experience has resulted in several positive developments.

"First, this allows Toro to understand and experience what it takes to organize and run a distribution operation," he said. "It also allows us to view this market up close. Each market is different, but it's very price-sensitive here. This market has, in the past, sold on price instead of added value and services.

"We want to go about things in a different way; be a resource for these customers instead of mere

Stick to News.

order-takers."

In Texas, Toro has indeed shaken things up. There are no salespeople at Professional Turf Products, only account executives who concentrate on communication, networking and sales. Field reps have been replaced by "equipment application representatives."

"We call them our EARs," Clark explained. "They're our ears to the customer. They're the experts on fine details and product specs. Continued on next page

GOLF COURSE THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY FLAYERS SURVEYED ON SUPERS' ROLE Image enhanced but golfers insis on 'green' look A UNITED PUBLICATION VOLUME 8, NUMBER 4 APRIL 1996 + \$4.50 INSIDE ORLANDO, Fla. - Most golfers) superintendents as trained professionand the person most responsible **Upfront Prep** course conditions - news courses ers should find encouraging const national efforts to elevate their ina Sod Srruction philoso-COPY FRANK ON THIS! Disturbingly, however, few gold ognized the Golf Course Superint la stock ... High demand Association of America (GCSM superintendents' national org 10 e success of Also troubling was the unwille most golfers to accept poorerp ditions in exchange for reduce and water use on their course According to a recent surve conducted by the National G STUDY SHOWS: Name designers pull higher dues and green fees By PETER BLAIS HARRISBURG, Pa ert Trent Jones Sr. (left) has teamed with elder so Report Trent Jones Sr. (left) has trained with elder son Bobby to form a new architectural entity. RTI Golf Ventures. For story, see base 37 Private courses desi ALL IN THE FAMILY by signature archit command bigherinia Ventures. For story, see page 37. COURSE MAINTENANCE WARE THE 17 Sprinkler uniformity sought but not found . New Chemistry: biologicals & nematodes.........20-21 Potting green research: Top 10 projects



Nedin garners Toro's Top Service award

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PHOENIX, Ariz. - Toro's Top Service Achievement Award was presented to Jim Nedin of E.H. Griffith during its annual distributor convention here in December. The award criteria to reach this level is based on performance in customer satisfaction, reporting and working clearly with the manufacturer on continuous product quality improvements, and in product repair and training.

Nedin has been associated with the turf industry for 30 years. He's taught turf equipment seminars for 16 years. For the past 21 years he's been em-

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ployed at E.H. Griffith, Inc., in Pittsburgh, Pa., as the service manager for Toro commercial turf equipment.

Nedin is currently serving his second term on **Toro's Commercial Service** Advisory Board. In 1987 he

was the recipient of the prestigious "Mr. Service Award." In 1995 and 1996 he received Toro Top Service Achievement awards.



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Jim Nedin

rigation products for golf courses, has hired Dale Anne Davidson as a regional sales manager.

ASUZA, Calif. - Rain Bird's

Golf Division, manufacturer of ir-

Rain Bird hires Davidson, Seward

As regional sales manager, Davidson will develop sales of golf course irrigation products throughout an 11-state region in the North Central U.S. Her responsibilities include distributor sales personnel development and product education of golf course architects, contractors, and irrigation consultants within the sales territory.

Rain Bird's Golf Division has also announced the hiring of Leslie J. Seward as area sales manager. In her new position, Seward is responsible for sales and distributor relations throughout the Southeast. Additionally, she periodically meets with golf course architects, contractors, and irrigation consultants to inform and educate them on the latest Rain Bird product developments.

In other Rain Bird news, the Golf Division has named Irrigation Supply Co., Inc. (ISCO) of Louisville, Ky., as the sole distributor of Rain Bird golf course irrigation products in Kentucky, southern Indiana and Tennessee. Founded in 1962 by Jim Kirchdorfer Sr., ISCO is the oldest irrigation supply company in Kentucky. Today, the distributor employs more than 55 people in ten locations throughout Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois and Missouri.



Kurt Templeton

TEMPLETON JOINS NETAFIRM

FRESNO, Calif. - Netafirm Irrigation, Inc. has announced the appointment of Kurt Templeton as Northwestern sales manager, Landscape Division. Templeton will cover Northern California, Oregon, Washington, Utah and Idaho. Templeton joins Netafirm after a highly successful career with Makita Power Tools, where he specialized in dealer and distributor sales and support in the Western United States.

Factory stores

Continued from previous page

They work with irrigation experts at the course, for example. They work with our account executives, who are financial experts. Then AEs come up with packages that tie it all together.

"We're trying to leverage our people and relationships to the one-stop shop ... We're trying to build a system that's self-perpetuating. Today we're still in the infant stages; we've only been up and running for eight months. But it has been embraced here. The customers see we're trying to help them and be sensitive to their time."

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on course costs

By MARK LENLIE Worried the cust of golf is starting to drive people from the game, the incoming and outgoing presidents of the American Society of Golf Course Architects have presented arguments that would lead developers to make harsh choices about Picking sides in a pointtheir projects.

counterpoint atmosphere. Past President Jeff Brauer of Golfscapes in Houston and new President Denis Gritfiths of Braselton, Ga . agreed construction costs have escalated too high but disagreed over the cure.

projects, Griffiths said. Everyone today is doing A on page 40

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