

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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## INSIDE

### Midwest Still Booming

The North Central region once again leads the nation in development. How much is too much? ..... 4-5

### The Ascension of Alice

Read our Q&A with Alice Dye, who will take over as the ASGCA's first female president this month .... 39



#### COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Jim Colbert (center) studies site plans in Kansas City with Baxter Spann (left) of Finger, Dye, Spann and Ron Fogler of the development firm, Colbert-Burns & McDonnell (CBM). For a story on CBM, see page 49.

#### COURSE MAINTENANCE

Q&A with Iowa researcher Nick Christians ..... 17  
UCal Riverside unveils traffic simulator ..... 21  
Safety Focus: Lockouts, tagouts & gasoline ..... 30

#### COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Alabama may add another stop to Jones Trail ..... 6  
Hurdzan: Golf is addicted to water ..... 39  
Matthews adds Spencer to his staff ..... 45

#### COURSE MANAGEMENT

Gone Private: Senior Tour site makes switch ..... 11  
Golden Bear Club Services, managing its own .... 51  
Alfonso on the value of family businesses ..... 52

#### SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Yamaha enters tour-sponsorship arena ..... 59  
Barenbrug expands U.S., overseas operations .... 62  
What's new in the marketplace? ..... 66

## New Reality: Find funding or fall back

### • Legends Group forms management REIT

By PETER BLAIS

GolfTrust of America — a real estate investment trust established by the founders of Myrtle Beach, S.C.-based Legends Group — will raise \$300 million over the next three years allowing it to acquire at least 30 courses by the end of the decade, according to the investment banking

firm that helped develop Golf Trust's original February stock offering.

"Golf Trust owns 10 courses at this time," said Christopher Haley, senior research analyst with Wheat First Butcher Singer. "It expects to acquire another \$55 million in 1997, \$110 million in 1998 and \$140 million in

1999. That should allow the REIT to more than triple the size of its portfolio."

Golf Trust of America's goal is to use the estimated \$49.9 million raised through its initial Feb. 7 stock offering and a line of credit to acquire high-quality, daily-fee and private courses and lease them back to independent lessees, usually the prior own-

Continued on page 55



Roger Behrstock

### • Meadowbrook locates \$40 million partner in Apollo

By PETER BLAIS

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Fast-growing Meadowbrook Golf Group has completed a \$40 million deal with Apollo Real Estate Advisors, a real-estate investment firm, that will allow Meadowbrook to expand its efforts to build, buy, lease and manage golf courses.

"If we do a good job with this first effort, Apollo has the ability to supply us with a great amount of money down the road," said Meadowbrook President Roger Behrstock. "We've really become their golf wing. This \$40 million will lead to \$100 million in actual transactions. We'll probably look at issuing a REIT (real estate investment trust) in a year or two."

The exact details have

Continued on page 57

### Study: Golf has minimal impact on water table

By MARK LESLIE

WHEATON, Md. — Preliminary findings of studies monitoring ground- and surface-water quality at nearly 40 golf courses reinforce industry claims that courses are not a danger, particularly when compared to other sources of chemicals, according to Stuart Cohen, president of Environmental & Turf Services, Inc. here.

"Overall, these results show that golf courses are not having a significant impact on human health or aquatic organisms relative to other sources of chemicals in the environment," Cohen said of the study he conducted for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Foundation.

Cohen said he was pleasantly surprised by the surface-water data, having

Continued on page 67



#### THE WATER'S EDGE

The peninsular 4th green at a new Palmer design — Legacy Golf Course in Sarasota, Fla. — illustrates the interdependence of water and golf. For a special report on the politics of water rights, see pages 35-38. For an update on the Legacy and other Palmer Golf Course Design projects, see page 50.

## Developers delight in Costa Rican economics

By MARK LESLIE

FLAMINGO BEACH, Costa Rica — First it was fishing. Then surfing. And now, with the advent of its second and third courses, Costa Rica has joined the world of tourism.

Rancho Las Colinas opened nine holes in November and anticipates opening the second nine around Labor Day. The Robert Trent Jones II-designed Melia Conchal Golf Club intends to open the back nine holes in June. These are the first 18-hole courses built here in 23

Continued on page 44



Ron Garl's course at Rancho las Colinas, located near Flamingo Beach, is one of several Costa Rican projects coming to fruition.

## Water research

Continued from page 1

expected higher concentrations of chemicals and a higher frequency of detection because of storm-water runoff. But he was unpleasantly surprised by high detection rates in the ground-water database.

"I think that if we got more data from more sites, the two [ground and surface water] would even out," he said.

"I feel if we had more data from more golf courses around the country, and where the wells weren't immediately adjacent to managed areas, the ground-water detection rates would drop off significantly over time."

Indeed, a source of optimism is that the monitoring wells in the golf course studies were usually shallow and next to treated turf, whereas agricultural studies have usually focused on drinking-water wells that are deeper and farther away from treatment areas.

"The results are actually favorable for [golf courses] when one considers that fact," Cohen said.

Cohen will recommend to the GCSAA Research Committee that an updated study be done in a year or two. "We learned there are many studies just beginning, or not yet finished," he said. "We think our research actually catalyzed interest in doing studies. We got several calls from golf course superintendents wanting information so they could perform research."

Citing the need for studies in the mid-continent and other areas, because of "major geographic deficiencies" in previous research, Cohen said, "It would be appropriate for others besides the golf industry to step up to the table, perhaps working jointly with the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] and/or pesticide manufacturers on studies."

Despite geographic data gaps, some conclusions are apparent after reviewing the 16,700 database entries from the 38 golf courses in his study, Cohen said.

The concentrations of nitrate in ground water were surprisingly low—lower than what is typically seen in intensive agricultural areas, he said. Nitrate concentrations in surface water were also low. Pesticide detection rates and concentrations in surface water were somewhat lower than expected.

The federal standard for Maximum Calculation Level (MCL) or Health Advisory Level (HAL) of nitrate is 10 parts per million (ppm). The HAL is the upper concentration a person could drink in water for a lifetime without showing any harmful effects. Levels slightly above 10 ppm might or might not be harmful.

Testing of wells, drains and lysimeters at 72 locations showed an average concentration of 1.6 ppm of nitrate in the ground water. Thirty of 849 data entries exceeded 10 ppm, but all but one of those were at a new golf course situated on former farmland.

Continued on page 69

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For more information, call 207-846-0600, ext. 264.

# Water research shows positive results for courses

Continued from page 67

Of 906 database entries for surface water, nitrate was found in 706 instances at an average concentration of 0.5 ppm.

Further, in ground-water monitoring for pesticides, Cohen said researchers found 160 detections in 12,214 data entries. "The typical detection limit," he said, is 1 part per billion (ppb), while some detection limits were at 1/10th ppb. Nine of the detections exceeded HALs or MCLs.

"We have wells next to tees. We have tests from drains under greens. These are not drinking-water wells in bedrock," Cohen pointed out.

Surface-water monitoring discovered that in 2,731 entries, pesticide

levels exceeded MCLs or HALs five times, or 0.02 percent. Nineteen of the entries (0.7 percent) exceeded aquatic MACs (Maximum Allowable Concentrations for aquatic organisms). The average concentration was 0.07 to 6.8 ppb, Cohen said, depending on how non-detections were counted.

The most frequently detected chemicals in ground water were 2,4-D, fenamiphos/f. sulfoxide (found in Namacur) and arsenic, he said. Atrazine, fenamiphos, diazinon and 2,4-D were the most-often detected chemicals in surface water.

The 2,4-D levels are not a concern because, although it is very mobile, it has a very short half-life and con-

centrations are usually very low, Cohen said. "And, in some cases, it may not have been from golf course use. In two places where it was detected those courses do not even use 2,4-D. And it can easily be misidentified by labs."

Saying the current study is based mostly on worst-case locations for wells and other test areas, he said, "One could infer that similar golf course studies would indicate a significantly reduced impact relative to agriculture."

Cohen intends to make his recommendations to the GCSAA and publish his findings in a peer-reviewed journal as well as in the GCSAA's *Golf Course Management*.

Cir.#	Advertiser	Page
133	AgrEvo	49
112	AgrEvo	21
116	Agro-Tech 2000	28
109	American Cyanamid	16
141	American Cyanamid*	63
143	Ametek	66
128	The Andersons	42
145	Aqua Control, Inc.	70
111	AquaMaster	20
132	Aquatrols	48
124	Bayer Corporation	36-37
142	Club Car	64
171	Continental Bridge	69
120	E.F. Burlingham & Sons	32
146	E-Z-GO	71
165	Enwood Structures	68
160	Excel Bridge Mfg.	68
108	Flowtronex PSI	15
135	Fore Par	50
161	Formost Construction Co.	68
162	Harrington/Harco Corp.	68
144	HJM Corporation	70
147	Jacobsen	72
110	John Deere	18-19
164	JPF Distributors	68
107	Kubota	13
168	Master of the Links	69
122	Millcreek Manufacturing	35
—	NOVARTIS	8-9
—	NOVARTIS*	52-53
127	Nutramax	41
149	Otterbine/Barebo	34
117	Par Aide	29
152	Partac Peat	70
138	PBI/Gordon Corporation	58
136	Pennington Seed	56
166	Precision Small Engine	69
106	Prolink	12
—	Public Golf Forum	4-5
169	Quail Valley Farms	69
113	Ransomes, Ransomes Corp.	22-23
115	Regal Chemical	27
123	Regal Chemical	35
140	Regal Chemical	62
151	Rhone-Poulenc*	54-55
118	Rhone-Poulenc*	30-31
153	Rhone-Poulenc*	30-31
—	RISE*	30-31
—	RISE	65
105	Romtec	11
126	Smithco	40
104	Standard Golf	10
167	Steadfast Bridge Co.	69
101	Tee-2-Green	2
121	Terra Industries	33
131	Terra Industries*	46-47
103	The Toro Company	6-7
129	Toro Comm'l. Prod. Div.	43
170	Trims International Software	69
150	Trims International Software	65
163	Turflite, Inc.	68
125	Ty-Crop	38
102	United Horticultural Supply	3
137	Valent*	57
119	Verti-Drain/Emrex	32
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139	Zeneca Professional Prods	60-61

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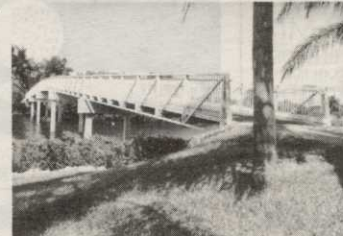
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