

BRIEFS



GRAHAM, PANKS SPLIT

Player consultant David Graham and architect Gary Panks are terminating their 10-year association in golf course design. Graham is concentrating on a full PGA Senior Tour schedule, while Panks will continue to focus on course design and share more of the credit with his staff, including senior designers Gary Stephenson and Michael Rhoads. The firm will continue to operate its Phoenix and Dallas offices under the name of Gary Panks Associates.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? ENGH KNOWS

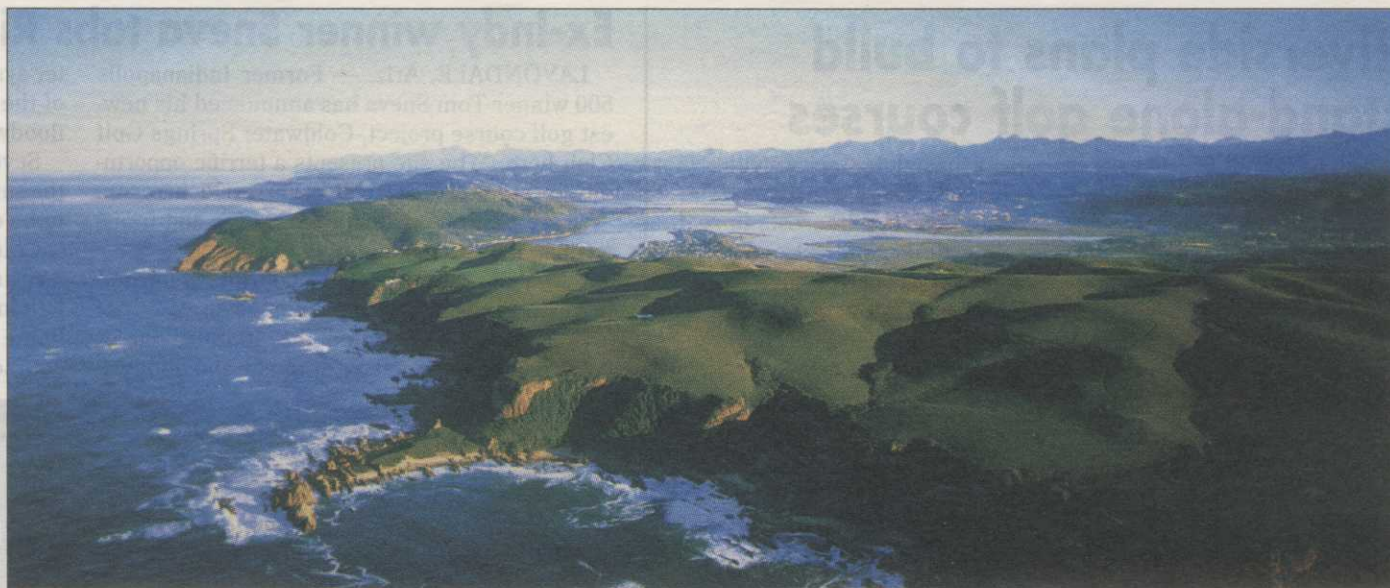
James Engh of Castle Rock, Colo., has changed the name of his golf course design firm and has established a web site on the World Wide Web. The firm previously known as Global Design Group, Inc. has been renamed James J. Engh, Golf Design Group, Inc. The web site can be contacted at www.enghgolf.com.

PARAGON OPENS IN ATLANTA

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Paragon Construction International, Inc., has opened its Eastern Region office in Atlanta. The office will oversee the day-to-day operations on all of Paragon's construction projects located east of the Mississippi River and north of mid-Florida. The Atlanta office is Paragon's fourth corporate office to open in North America. Others are located in North Palm Beach, Fla.; Phoenix, Az.; and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Outside of North America, Paragon has offices in Singapore and the Philippines.

SOCIETY HONORS GOLF DIMENSIONS

WHITTIER, Calif. — GolfDimensions has been honored by the Southern California Chapter of The American Society of Landscape Architects with two 1997 Quality of Life awards. GolfDimensions received both an Honor Award and an Award of Excellence in the Water Reclamation and Conservation Design categories for the Desert Willow Golf Resort located in Palm Desert. The awarding committee stated: "The project reflects a high level of responsibility to the environment while providing an attractive, challenging sports experience. This course will hopefully set a trend to create recreational arenas in which local natural character has aesthetic value."



Too good to be true? Golfplan will design 18 holes here at the Sparreboosch Clifftop Estate and Country Club in Knysna, South Africa.

South African property an eye-lifter for Fream

KNYSNA, South Africa — Working a site that is "nearly too good to be true," Golfplan has been retained to design 18 holes here at the Sparreboosch Clifftop Estate and Country Club, a US\$100 million residential resort development situated on spectacular headlands overlooking the Indian Ocean.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for March 1 and the course will be the

southernmost on the African continent when it opens with a planned New Year's Eve 1999 celebration. This will provide Golfplan a unique bookend, as the Santa Rosa, California-based firm also designed the continent's northernmost course: the 27-hole Golf de Tabarka Resort in the Tunisian port city of Tabarka.

"When we opened Tabarka in 1992, people called it the Cypress Point of the

Mediterranean," said Ron Fream, Golfplan founder and principal. "So it's fitting that our first South African project will be Sparreboosch, because the site couldn't be more suggestive of Pebble Beach."

Developed by PK Developments Ltd. of Bangkok and Cape Town, the Sparreboosch project will feature a 150-room hotel and more than 400 holiday/

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Permitting planner Dianna Almini consults with Neal Meagher, senior architect with Graves and Pascuzzo Golf Course Design.

Designers offer permitting services

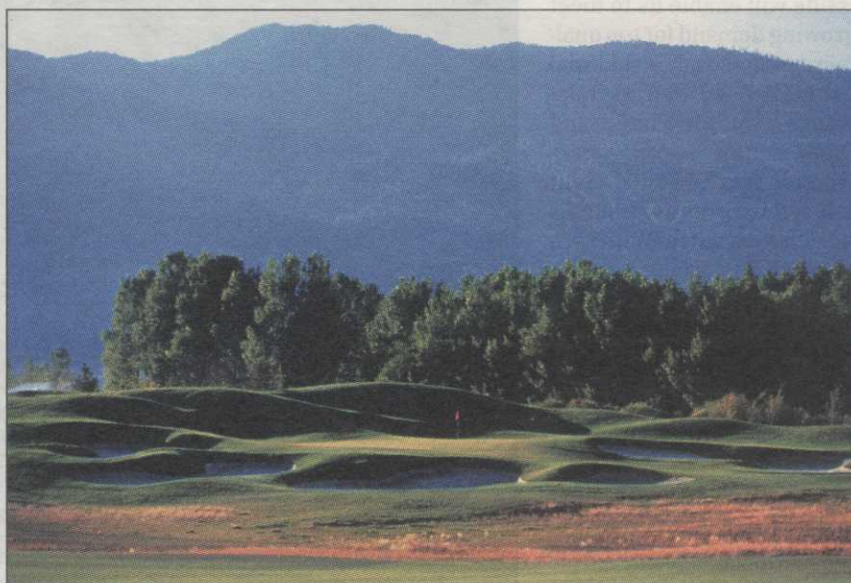
By MICHAEL LEVANS

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. — Looking for a way to stick out in the growing crowd of golf course designers, Robert Muir Graves & Damian Pascuzzo Limited have decided to bring development services in-house to help clients get past what is often the toughest obstacle for any golf development, permitting.

To head this effort, Graves and Pascuzzo hired Dianna Almini as director of development services. Almini is charged with the task of weaving clients through the maze public agencies often assemble, a job she had been doing as an independent consultant for the past 12 years in California.

Almini sees her new position becoming a chief selling point for the design firm. "For the most part, we believe that everybody who is in this market can de-

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The 5th hole at Lightning 'W' Ranch Golf Club displays the beauty of the Pascuzzo-Graves design.

Q & A Pascuzzo turns a break into a successful career

Damian Pascuzzo is managing partner of Graves and Pascuzzo Golf Course Design & Development. Pascuzzo oversees the firm's Walnut Creek, Calif., office, where his duties include establishing design standards, overseeing office production work, site qualification, project management, construction inspection and design. Pascuzzo earned a bachelor of science degree from California State Polytechnic University in 1981 and a year later joined Robert Muir Graves, who, since 1955, has participated in more than 650 golf course architectural projects worldwide.



Damian Pascuzzo

Golf Course News: How did you and Bob Graves team up?

Damian Pascuzzo: I was getting out of college and looking for a job. So I called him up and he was gracious enough to invite me to come talk with him. What I thought would be an hour interview turned out to be virtually all day. We talked about golf for a third of

the day, jazz for a third and aviation for a third. It was evident we got along beautifully, but he just didn't have any openings at the time.

Bob called me about a year later, said he had an opening and asked if I was still interested. I said, 'How about Monday morning?' We've

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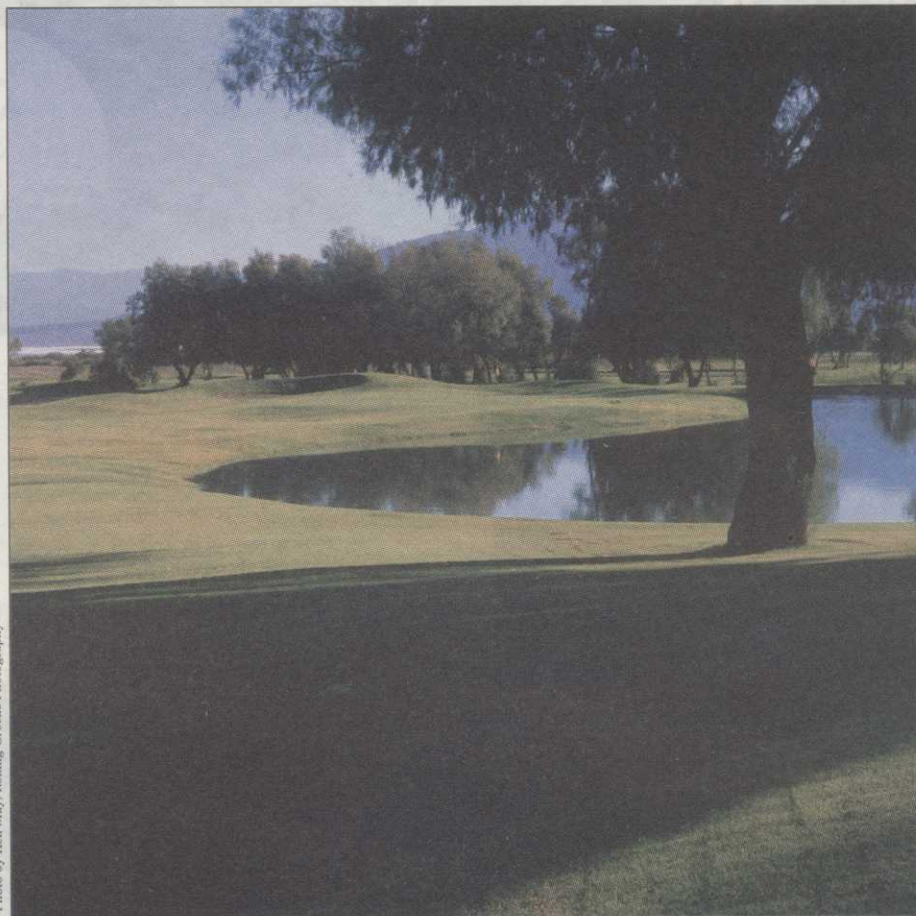
Death Valley given new life

DEATH VALLEY, Calif. — The Furnace Creek Inn & Ranch Resort's 18-hole golf course has undergone a \$1.3-million renovation. Headed by Perry Dye of Dye Designs, the renovation includes five completely redesigned holes and a new irrigation system.

At 214 feet below sea level, the track is the lowest grass golf course in the world. Its fairways are lined with palm and tamarisk trees, and it offers breathtaking views of the surrounding Panamint Mountains from anywhere on the course.

The five redesigned holes include two par-3s, two par-4s and one par-5. The irrigation system has been designed to insure wall-to-wall green even while enduring Death Valley's celebrated heat. Other renovations include improvement of the tee boxes on all holes and additional design modifications and bunkering throughout the course.

In addition to working on the lowest grass course in the world at Furnace Creek, Dye also designed the highest-elevated course in the Western Hemisphere.



The lowest golf course on earth gets a Perry Dye-designed facelift.

Rees Jones' Rio Secco track opens

HENDERSON, Nev. — Rio Hotel & Casino, Inc. subsidiary, Rio Development Company, Inc., opened Rio Secco Golf Club in late October in this Las Vegas suburb.

Designed by Rees Jones, Rio Secco Golf Club plays to a par 72 over 7,250 yards. It is planned that there will be at least 15 minutes between tee times, to provide an enjoyable experience for all players.

Company President James A. Barrett Jr. said: "The Rio Secco Golf Club was developed by us as an additional amenity for customers of the Rio, a destination resort. The course is now available for play. Individuals who are not Rio hotel/casino customers may call the golf course for available tee times and rates. Presently, the course fee for customers of the Rio will be \$190 per round, and for others the course fee will be \$300 per round.

The clubhouse is scheduled to open in April.

Architect's on-staff permitting specialist speeds process

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sign a pretty decent golf course," said Almini. "In order to set ourselves apart, we decided to provide a service that other firms were not providing."

The key to making this new service work is based on Almini's ability to give clients access to the permitting, political and environmental realities that revolve around a given project. Once those parameters are established, the designer steps in to illustrate what sort of golf course the client can expect to achieve on

that particular property.

By eliminating the layers of outside consulting, Almini said that the firm can save clients time and money with this congealed, in-house team.

"In most cases, developers would have to buy that service through land-use attorneys or environmental consultants. We can go through now as a team, and assess that for them. We can tell them how long it may take, who will oppose them and how to diffuse that opposition."

Time, in most cases, is of the essence.

Permitting can take anywhere from one to five years. The average hovers around 24 months.

"Politically, we can save them years," said Almini. "We know how to go into a community and quickly establish relationships with officials, if we don't have them already. Most developers don't have the time to go and do the coffee sessions in someone's kitchen. I do that."

Almini's new position is starting to make a difference. Orlando, Fla.-based

Signature Resorts Inc. recently signed on with Graves & Pascuzzo for a project in Napa County due to the new service.

"It was a project that Dianna had intimate familiarity with," said Eric Lambdin, senior analyst at Signature. "She has a very strong knowledge of the political dynamics of Napa County. If you don't have that knowledge it can be quite treacherous for a developer."

According to Lambdin, the established development services team gave the project, which has yet to be named, an edge.

"A developer typically ends up with kind of a team anyway, but they end up taking a piecemeal approach. Not to say that those teams can't be successful — they can be very successful. But you can enhance your possibility of success by having a team that has worked together. Their level of communication is 10 times better than when you bring in a couple people together and hope that the dynamics work."

Almini, who started out doing similar work for subdivisions, shopping malls and hospitals, thought that getting away from those large, commercial projects and into golf would be a breeze.

"It was a slap in the face," she said. "I see more opposition to golf courses than the commercial projects I've permitted. Golf and the environment don't mix. The golf industry has done a great job of informing those inside the golf industry. We have lots of trade publications that tell us all these great movements toward pesticide reduction and the Audubon programs. But American households aren't aware of these movements. They believe we're going to be contaminating their backyards."

In those cases, Almini will be called upon to put out the fire.

"The key to this business is to assess the issues before they blow up," she said.

Always read and follow label directions.

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