

The (Fundraising) World According to Father Leo

By PETER BLAIS

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — Golf and the Church. An unlikely partnership? Not really, according to Leo Armbrust, a Catholic priest who is trying to couple a \$60 million teenage drug and alcohol rehabilitation campus with a world-class golf course here.

Father Leo, as he is affectionately known in the Greater Miami community where he also serves as the National Football League Miami Dolphins' team chaplain, took a few minutes recently to explain why marrying golf with programs to help troubled kids makes all the sense in the spiritual/practical world

and, particularly, how he has succeeded in raising \$20 million in 16 months for the project.

"The challenge," he said, "isn't to come up with new ways of helping people. There are already cutting-edge operations and procedures and philosophies out there that are doing tremendously good work. The challenge

today is coming up with creative ways of funding programs that help people.

"If I want to go to New York to meet Fortune 500 CEOs, I soon found out that every time I go, I have to get an entree from someone who knows them. I might be lucky to get 15, 20, or at best 30 minutes to sit down and talk

about what I'm doing. And usually, that's not enough time.

"So, instead of me standing outside an office in a mile-long line, I discovered how addictive golf is as a behavior. I know people with incredible IQs, who will stand outside in a terrific thunderstorm and try to hit a little white ball. All intelligence and reason goes out the window.

"So I decided if I was going to

Continued on next page

Tidal wave

Continued from page 1

Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player, Pete Dye and Tom Fazio. The five architects have donated their design services, said Armbrust.

"The hardest thing about this is putting the five of us together in a room and seeing if any of us come out," joked Nicklaus during the press conference announcing the project.

"I'm happy to be here and happy to find out what Jack knows about building golf courses," chided Palmer.

A half-dozen contractors have also offered free services to build the course. Profits from the private club will help operate the treatment center and also provide a training ground for the teenagers to learn golf course maintenance and landscaping skills.

"I have 70 percent of the golf course being built right now for nothing," Armbrust said.

Armbrust hopes to start construction by late 1999 and have the course ready for play by the end of the year 2000. He's already raised \$20 million toward the \$60 million project in the past 16 months.

"A lot of my friends who have given, violate the 14-club rule," Armbrust said. "They don't have more than 14 clubs in their bag. They belong to more than 14 clubs."

Last May, a Florida-based golf course maintenance company approached Armbrust and offered to do all the horizontal work for free. Armbrust's attorney estimated the value of that donation at \$2.5 million. What did the company want in return? Nothing.

According to Armbrust: "The company said 'We do \$350 million of business around the country and employ 4,000 people. We don't have a human resource pool. If you allow us, we'll build a facility to teach your kids landscape maintenance, agronomy and golf course maintenance. If we train them, we'll hire them.'"

The private, non-profit facility will provide therapy, education and vocational training for South Florida's troubled youth. It will have 250 kids in residence, aged 13 to 18. Another 300 to 500 slots will be available for day students.

•••
Nearby, construction could

Continued on next page

GOLF COURSE NEWS

A friendly design in a hostile environment...

Introducing the New Top-Serviceable Rock Screen EAGLE™ Rotor.



Don't let sand, silt and harsh chemicals get the best of your rotors. Get the rugged durability and low maintenance of Rain Bird's most advanced line of rotors.

- The newly redesigned EAGLE™ gear drive rotors feature the Top-Serviceable Rock Screen/Integrated Valve Seat (patent pending)

that allows you to remove debris and flush pipes without digging.

- A reinforced polypropylene case increases durability and offers resistance to 265 chemicals.



- The new performance nozzles improve water distribution.

Give yourself a fighting chance. Get the new EAGLE rotors and leave the dirty work to us.

RAIN BIRD

Call your Rain Bird Golf distributor at 800-984-2255
or contact us at our web site—<http://www.rainbird.com>

Tidal wave

Continued from previous page

begin in October on the Golf Digest Magazine community, which would eventually include two 18-hole championship courses, an 18-hole pitch-and-putt track, elaborate golf campus, 105,000 square feet of office space, 50,000 square feet of commercial property and 2,150 homes. The project is located on the north side of PGA Boulevard, directly across the street from the PGA of America headquarters.

Developer John Bills of JCB is teaming with *Golf Digest* on the ambitious 2,300-acre project, which will also include 10 corporate lodges, 100 golf cottages and hundreds of acres of open space. JCB Golf Ventures also developed nearby Ballen Isles Country Club, according to project director Jack Mathis. *Golf Digest* will be part owner and is lending its licensing name to the project.

"This will fulfill a need for *Golf Digest*, which has been looking for a place to hold corporate events and a base for its golf schools," Mathis said.

Tom Fazio is designing all three daily-fee courses and the practice center that will serve as headquarters for the *Golf Digest* golf schools.

"The 18-hole, pitch-and-putt course will be roughly 1,000 yards long, with holes ranging from 25 to 95 yards," Mathis said. "The holes will be lighted."

If all goes as planned, the golf component could be ready for play by November 1999, with a grand opening tentatively planned in conjunction with the January 2000 PGA Merchandise Show. Green fees will be commensurate with nearby upscale, daily-fee facilities, Mathis added.

•••

Then there is Jack Nicklaus, the designer/investor of a planned course that partner and former NFL running back Tucker Fredrickson calls "Jack's legacy."

Nicklaus, who makes his home minutes away in North Palm Beach, and 34 founding partners plan to begin construction in October on The Bear's Club, a premier private club located on 369 acres along the Palm Beach/Jupiter border. The new development is tucked between the existing Frenchman's Creek and Admiral's Cove golf communities.

"I've always dreamed of building a very fine private golf club in my own backyard," said Nicklaus, who will also be the club chairman.

The Bear's Club has been compared to Muirfield Village in Nicklaus' native Ohio. But unlike Muirfield, it will not be a high-profile facility nor will it host a major tournament. There will be a 12-room lodge, 12 golf cottages and 70 house lots. Plans are to limit members to 300.

The project, which like Renaissance Village is located on property owned by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, has received city approvals and is awaiting the go-ahead from the South Florida Water Management District, Fredrickson said.

Fredrickson, the former New York Giants running back, has worked in the securities and real-estate market and was involved in the construction of the Greg Norman-designed Medalist Golf Club that opened in 1995 in Hobe Sound.

"We're awaiting bids from a number of local contractors," Fredrickson said.

The World

Continued from previous page

go ahead and get corporate CEOs for more than 15 to 30 minutes, I could invite them and three of their friends down to play at this world championship golf course. Now I've got them for four hours, with no phone, no faxes and no interruptions. Where else can you get someone for four hours to do that? Not only that, I don't need the handsome brochure, fantastic slide show or great spiel. I got them where I want them.

"Today, you have to give people something back for their philanthropy. You have to make it a worthwhile and needed cause and it has to be tax-deductible. It has to be a win-win situation.

"[From the charitable facility's standpoint] Not only is it a way to market and advertise what you're doing, it's a way of enlisting high-profile corporations that get something back, and at the same time enjoying the prospect of having their company name on a hole or a building on a campus that is helping kids.

"Florida ranks 44th in the nation in child-care services and education. Last

year, we were 47th, ahead of Louisiana, Mississippi and the District of Columbia. And we will be the third-largest state in the nation, passing New York, by the year 2000. So, essentially, this problem is not going away.

"I'm all in favor of promoting golf today for kids. Kids are getting opportunities on courses they never had before. But somebody has to cut the grass. So, part of the project we are endeavoring to build will teach these kids golf course maintenance, agronomy, landscape maintenance and a lot of things related to the golf

Continued on page 38



1-2-3™

The Medalist is a unique course with twelve acres of dwarf Bermuda and thirty-two acres of Greg Normans new GN 1. ROOTS 1-2-3™ Premix gave me the balanced nutritional program all in one container. ROOTS 1-2-3™ sure made it easier to maintain the quality of turf we are looking for here at the Medalist. ROOTS 1-2-3™ makes a difference.

Tim Rappach
Superintendent
Medalist Golf Club

ROOTS inc. 3120 Weatherford Road • Independence MO • 800 342-6173

DESTIN, Fla. — Diamond Players Club (DPC) began construction in mid-August on a new championship golf course near this town.

According to Todd Stottlemyre, Texas Rangers pitcher and CEO, the course is being designed by Mike Young and will be built by his company, Traditional Golf.

The facility is being built in conjunction with a Capital First Holdings housing development, Magnolia Bluffs, in Freeport. It is expected to open in mid-1999.

The project is the second new course

Diamond Players 'building' portfolio

announced by DPC in recent weeks. Stottlemyre previously announced construction of Diamond Players Club at Orlando, which is scheduled for completion in the fall of 1999. DPC, a golf management company, will own the Orlando facility and will have a 30-year lease on the Destin course, with extension options.

DPC also manages the Belleview Biltmore Golf Club in Belleair, and has several other projects under consider-

ation, Stottlemyre said.

Diamond Players Club at Destin will feature five sets of tees and measure about 7,000 yards from professional markers, said Gregg Gagliardi, PGA professional and DPC's chief operating officer.

It will have a two-ended practice range, with one end devoted to the DPC Golf Academy, an instruction program that will be integral to all DPC courses.

Young, whose courses are principally

in the Southeast but who has designed layouts as far away as Sao Paulo, Brazil and Bangalore, India, said the 220-acre DPC-Destin site is "ideal golf course terrain."

It is rolling and situated on a 100-foot-deep base of fine sand that will provide outstanding drainage."

He said the course will feature four lakes, and will offer a fair test for golfers of all abilities from all tee markers, without a lot of "forced long carries."

The club will be semi-private with about 150 members.

WE GO WHERE OTHERS WON'T



NATIONS CREDIT
A NationsBank Company

Golf & Recreational Finance

★ Acquisition ★ Renovation ★ Refinancing ★ Construction ★ Leasing ★ Mezzanine Loans

Debbie Suppa
770-643-7788
Atlanta, GA

Rick Nekoroski
978-777-8560
Boston, MA

John Seeburger
949-442-4356
Irvine, CA

Steve Sparks
702-832-4447
Incline Village, NV

Art Hills creation a cornerstone at Marsh Creek

NORTH PORT, Fla. — When it opens by the end of the year, The Preserve at Marsh Creek community will feature a private Arthur Hills Golf Course.

"Arthur Hills is one of the most prominent golf course architects in the country," said Development Manager Jim Beviillard. "We are very excited about the golf course he has designed for this community."

Hills described his layout as "a very picturesque course that will blend into the nature of the site very well."

He said many water features enhance the course's beauty but do not hinder the average golfer.

Also, many of the holes have elevated tees, giving the golfer a better perspective.

"Elevated tees allow the golfer to really see the course and adjust his shots," Hills said.

"They also really let the player see the natural beauty of this course. The Preserve at Marsh Creek is a master-planned community on 850 acres that will consist of patio and single-family homes and attached villas in the initial phase.

The gated community will also have a clubhouse, tennis center, junior Olympic-sized swimming pool and fitness center.

The World

Continued from page 35

course world. These kids will be exposed to these opportunities, so that when they leave this facility, they will have the skills that allow them to become productive citizens.

"I don't want to just take away a problem. I want to be able to replace it with some productive life and coping skills so that whatever they face in life, they can rebound a little bit better and be more resilient, rather than collapsing in ways that imprison them in drug and alcohol abuse or disruptive behavior.

"And it's all built around golf. It's a way of luring the high-profile philanthropist/benefactor/donor. If I were to just build this drug and alcohol facility for adolescents, you [Golf Course News and other media] would have never called me. But since I aligned it with golf, you wouldn't believe the coverage we've been getting, all over the country."