

BRIEFS



Paula Meeker



Dan Harper

ENVIRONMENTAL GOLF ADDS ONE, PROMOTES ANOTHER

CALABASAS, Calif. — Environmental Golf has added Paula Meeker to its business development team and named Dan Harper operations manager for course construction. In her new position, Meeker will seek to increase Environmental Golf's overall golf maintenance and management business. She formerly worked as director of marketing with Arnold Palmer Golf Course Management. Harper joined Environmental Golf in 1990, most recently serving as senior project manager overseeing purchasing and estimating for several projects. His new duties make him responsible for overall management of all golf course development and construction.

FORBES RE-ELECTED NCA PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON — Charles Forbes was re-elected president of the National Club Association at the organization's recent annual meeting. Forbes is a former partner with the Los Angeles law firm Musick, Peeler & Garrett; a past president of the California Club; and president of the California State Club Association. Also re-elected as officers were J. Bryan Williams, vice president; Frank Stover, treasurer; and Robert James, secretary.

NGCOA ADDS CALIF. CHAPTER

MONTEREY, Calif. — A new chapter of the National Golf Course Owners Association has been formed in California. Based in Monterey, the California Golf Course Owners Association (CGCOA) will be headed by President Paul Porter, president and chief executive officer of Poppy Hills Golf Course and Poppy Ridge Golf Course.

LINKSCORP ACQUIRES TWO

NORTHFIELD, Ill. — LinksCorp has purchased a pair of courses, Harbor View Golf Club in Suffolk, Va., and Willow Creek Golf Club in Greer, S.C. Tom Doak-designed Harbor View is scheduled to open this summer. Willow Creek is a Tom Jackson design that opened in 1995.

Arizona management company poised for changes

By PETER BLAIS

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — A new name and a new mission.

The Masters Group, a Scottsdale-based course management firm, has changed its name to MorningStar Golf International. MorningStar currently operates Great Eagle Golf Club in Surprise and Prescott Golf & Country Club in Prescott. The company hopes to add five courses to its portfolio in the next 12 months, according to Vice President Robert Berkman.

"We're positioning the company to expand and acquire new properties, and we're in the process of doing an equity raise," said MGI President Doug Remy, who predicted rapid and strong growth for the 5-year-old firm.

The new equity will allow MorningStar to focus its expansion efforts on underperforming, mid-tier courses, i.e. green fees between \$25 to \$60.

"We want to provide good, consistent service at the mid-tier," Berkman said. "Figuring out how to do it with the right economics is where we think there is some opportunity. You need to buy the



The par-3, 11th hole at Arizona's Great Eagle Golf Club, a MorningStar Golf International property.

courses at the right price with the right demographics around it. The service component, if done correctly, can really change and maximize the economics of the golf course."

In addition to Great Eagle and Prescott,

MGI also managed the Mountain View Golf Club for Arthur Anderson & Co. as court-appointed trustee, and provided consulting services for the San Marcos Golf & Country Club.

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Private club launched in Mich. resort area

By PETER BLAIS

ROSCOMMON, Mich. — Developers of a private country club community centered around a Tom Weiskopf-designed 18-hole course opening this summer are hoping to attract Detroit-area executives and professionals interested in purchasing second homes at the gateway to Northern Michigan's recreational playground.

Tom Barrett, Jerry Petersen and Payne Palmer have developed second-home, master-planned communities in Scottsdale, Ariz. (Desert Highlands and Troon Golf & Country Club), Payson, Ariz. (Chaparral Pines and The Rim), Seattle (McCormick Woods) and Scotland (Loch Lomond).

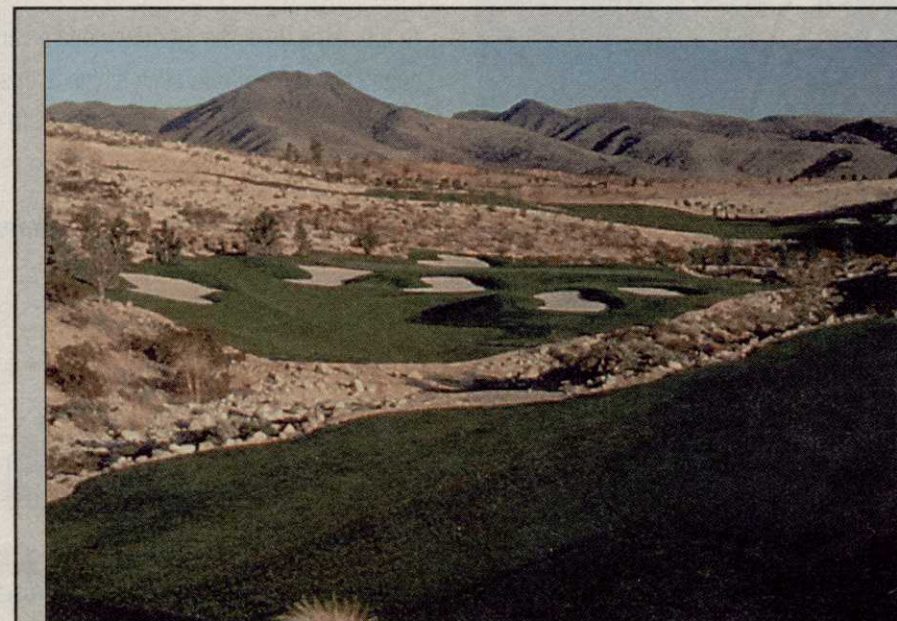
Forest Dunes represents their first effort in a Snow Belt area.

"You really have to think about developing amenities like ice skating, and being able to change over the pro shop to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing," Barrett said of the new venue. "We'll have buses bringing kids skiing at Boyne Mountain on Saturdays and Sundays. We need to promote other forms of recreation at a four-season resort."

"Golf runs from May through mid-October. We're so far north and west in the time zone that most of the summer you can tee off at 5:30 p.m. and still get in 18 holes."

The lot sale program, which is similar to ones the developers have used else-

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DEL WEBB ADDS LAS VEGAS TRACK

HENDERSON, Nevada — The Revere at Anthem, the first of four new daily-fee courses planned for Del Webb's Anthem Community, is open for play. Professional golfer Billy Casper and architect Greg Nash designed the 7,143-yard layout, located minutes from the Las Vegas Strip. John Marzolf has overseen construction and will serve as superintendent.

Kemper Sports to operate California's Black Gold course

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — Kemper Sports Management has signed a long-term agreement with the city of Yorba Linda, Calif., to manage Black Gold Golf Club, an 18-hole daily-fee course scheduled to open in November 2000. Kemper will act as development consultant during the construction phase and assume management upon opening.

Located 10 miles northwest of Disneyland in Orange County, Black Gold Golf Club will feature a lighted driving range, putting green and 12,000-square-foot clubhouse.

Architect Arthur Hills designed Black Gold on 225 acres of a former oil field that has been in production for Shell Oil Company since the 1930s. Hills paid special attention to the environment in his design as has planned to restore and integrate more than 60 acres of habitat for the native threatened bird, the gnatcatcher. Several active oil pumps will remain on the property.

Black Gold Golf Club is part of the city of Yorba Linda's Vista del Verde, a master-planned community that will convert 1,100 acres of the former oil field into a high-end residential development that will include 2,100 single-family homes, an elementary school, 10 miles of pedestrian and equestrian trails and two five-acre parks.



ACQUISITIONS

Forest Dunes

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where, began in mid-May. For an up-front \$60,000, founding members receive a 50-year family course membership and have their money returned within three years. They also receive a 25- to 30-percent discount on building lots. Forest Dunes has 50 founding members, most of whom are

being converted to property owners, Barrett said. Among the founding members are several high-profile automotive company executives.

"We want to make them a good deal because these are the type of people who will bring their best friends and golfing buddies up here," Barrett said. "Those are our future sales... What we find is

that we can usually count on each of our founders for at least one referral sale that first year."

The developers were able to purchase 1,190 of the project's 1,280 acres from a single owner. The property is surrounded by state and national forest located between Grayling and Roscommon, eight miles off Interstate 75 and about 2 1/2 hours north of Detroit,

placing it closer to Michigan's largest city than most Northern Michigan resorts.

"We try to keep the drive time to two hours from a major metropolitan area on this type of project," Barrett said. "Statistically, the closer you come to two hours, the more actively the community is used."

Weiskopf designed the first course, a 7,015-yard layout

scheduled to open late this summer. Tom Fazio is the likely architect for the second 18-hole course, which could begin construction as early as 2002.

"The unique thing about our property is that there are a lot of sand dunes," Barrett said. "The land was cleared and made into an apple orchard around the turn of the century and a lot of grasses appeared. The soil is so sandy that the wind, over time, has created these dunes. On the Weiskopf course, water comes into play on four holes, Nos. 9 and 10 are heavily wooded, and the rest play through the dunes. It makes for a unique experience."

In addition to their past dealings with Weiskopf, Barrett said they chose the former PGA Tour star to design the first course because of the amount of time he devotes to his projects.

"He was on site a day or two every two weeks last summer," Barrett remembered. "He does four to seven courses a year and spends a lot of time with the contractors and shapers. We just feel like we really get our money's worth with him... This will be a very traditional course with no more than 30 feet of elevation change on any one hole, making it very easy to walk. We're also planning a caddie program."

For much of this decade, Michigan has led or been near the top among U.S. states in new course openings, leading many to fear an over-saturation of courses in that market.

"It would [bother us] if we were a resort or daily-fee course," Barrett said. "We've set ourselves apart since we are totally private. The nice thing is that there are eight to 10 courses within a 45-minute drive, which allows our members to play not only our course, but a lot of others as well. Many of our early founding members have two or three other memberships at courses in Detroit, Florida or Arizona."

"We're marketing to two groups. The first is the Baby Boomers with two people working, kids in school, who are family recreation-oriented. We're also getting people who are planning to retire in a few years, plan to sell the Detroit house, and spend their summers here and winters in Arizona or Florida."

The developers began aggressively working on the project in the fall of 1996. They received their permits and entitlements surprisingly quickly, Barrett said, because there were no wetland/wildlife issues to contend with and the relatively poor tax base in

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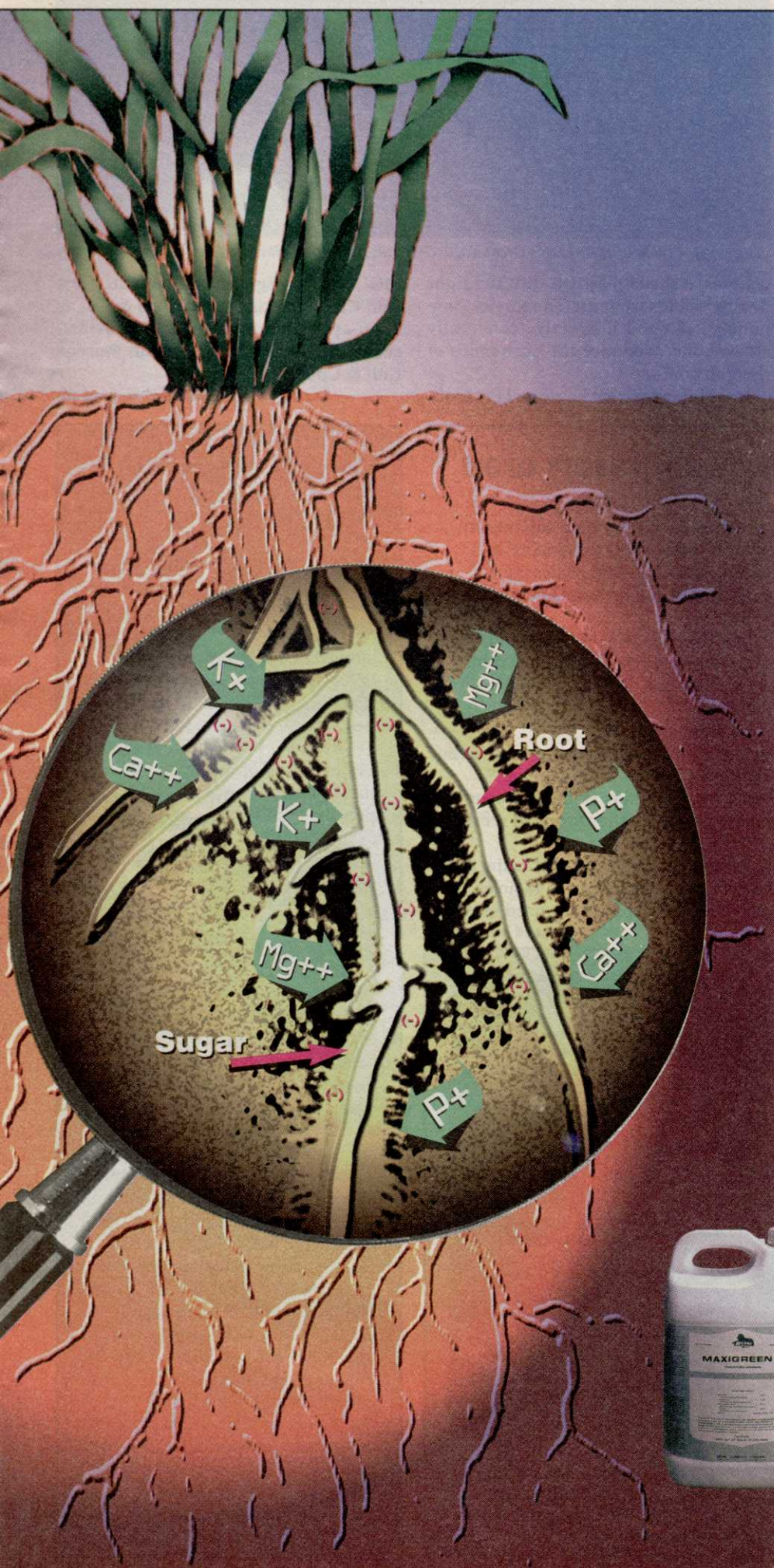
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CIRCLE #124

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

MorningStar

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According to *Golf Course News* figures, there are at least 71 Arizona courses operated by management companies and other multi-course operators. "There are still courses to be acquired," Berkman said. "There is a lot of competition, but this is still a great market."

Berkman described Great Eagle and Prescott as "fixer-uppers" when the firm bought them five years ago. "If you have a good business sense, you can turn projects like that around and get a cash flow to cover operational expenses," he said. "They really were neglected assets without short- or long-term capital plans in place. We've done all that and been able to turn around the economics of those two assets."

MorningStar is looking beyond Phoenix at expansion plans that include acquisitions, leases and third-party management contracts.

"We're going to be a lot more opportunistic and less strategic with where we are going initially," Berkman said. "We're looking at deals across the country and even outside the country... We're putting together an equity raise, sort of a real-estate fund. The success of that will help."

"As you look at historical perspectives, we're due for a bit of a real-estate downturn and we want to be in a position to capitalize on that."

Two of MorningStar's principals, Remy (Wyndham Hotels & Resorts) and Berkman (Marriott and Carefree Resorts) come from hospitality backgrounds.

"Much of the golf business is 40 years behind the hospitality industry in terms of customer service," Berkman said.

The other two principals are

Vice President of Operations Robert Leenhouts, a certified club manager with 28 years experience at such private clubs as Paradise Valley Country Club (Phoenix) and Bent Tree Country Club (Dallas); and Development Manager V.E. (Vic) Rimes, who has 35 years experience in numerous aspects of course development, construction and management.

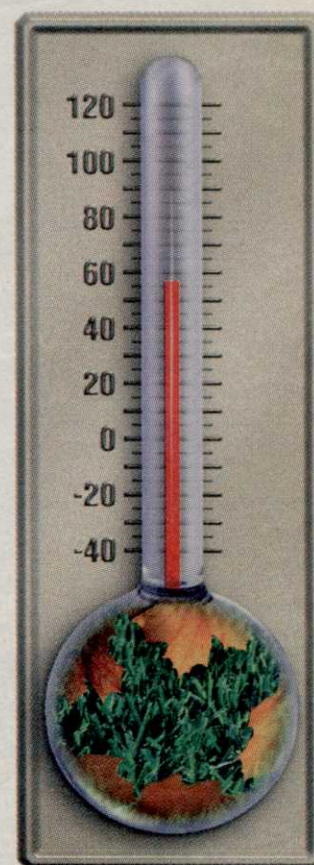
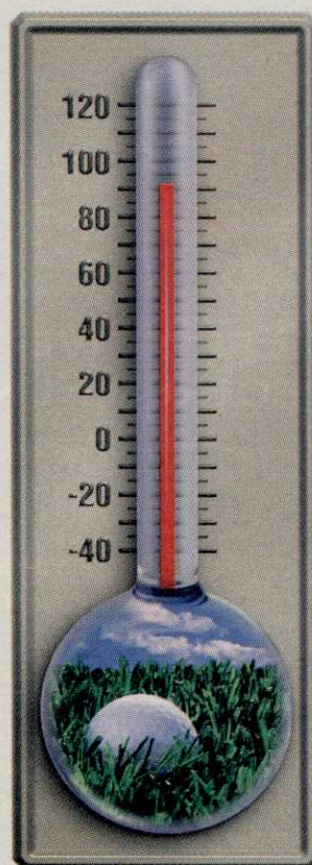
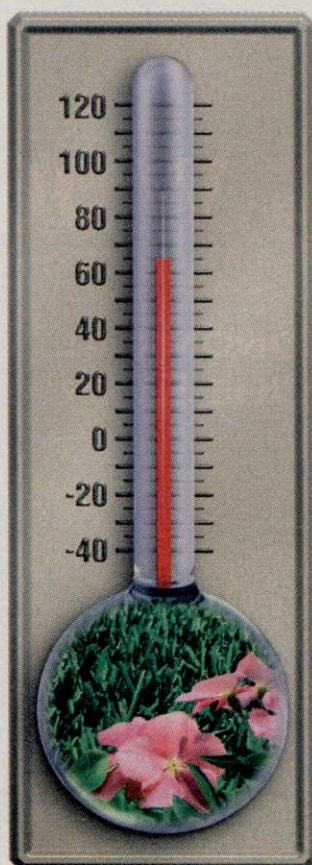
The name change to Morning-

Star was the result of difficulty in trade marking the Masters' name in light of objections from Atlanta's Augusta National Golf Club (home of The Masters golf tournament) and an Orlando, Fla. management company of nearly the same name (Masters Golf Corp.).

"With our positioning for more growth, it was just a good time to change the name," Berkman said.

CALIF. FIRM BROKERS SEVERAL DEALS

SAN DIEGO — The Golf & Resort Properties Group division of CB Richard Ellis recently brokered several transactions totaling more than \$30 million. The division, headed by Jeffrey Woolson, represented State Street Bank & Trust Co. of California in selling Sycamore Canyon Golf Course in Arvin for \$1.6 million to Golf Course Management. Representing U.S. Golf Inc. (ClubCorp), Woolson also brokered the sale of six municipal courses and one sports center in Philadelphia to Meadowbrook Golf. Woolson also arranged the sale of The International Golf Club in Boston for \$25 million and land at PGA West in La Quinta, Calif.



'Tis The Seasons For BlueChip.

Forest Dunes

Continued from previous page

Crawford County made the project attractive to county residents and officials. The developers also affiliated themselves with Audubon International. Audubon has made several presentations on Forest Dunes' behalf.

The only environmental red flag was the development's location, a quarter mile from the south branch of the Au Sable River, home to some of the best trout fishing in the country. Trout Unlimited and The Sierra Club had some concerns about what effect a 1,000-home community with two golf courses might have on the aquifer, Barrett said. Extensive hydrology studies helped ease those fears. Lakes are manmade and filled with well water.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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