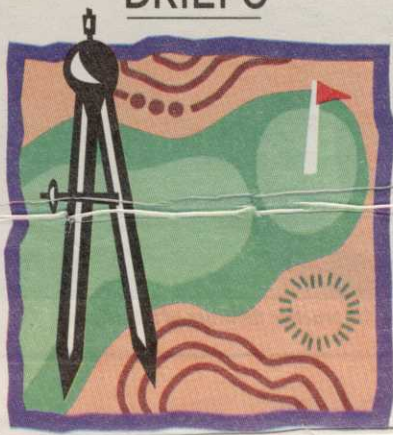


BRIEFS



OGRIN DESIGNING FIRST TRACK

HOUSTON, Texas — Community leaders and friends joined Jack Frey of Jack Frey Properties and PGA Tour professional David Ogrin to celebrate the groundbreaking for High Meadow Ranch Golf Club. The course, co-designed by Ogrin, sits on a rolling terrain of sandy soil and features more topographical differences than other courses in the area. This is the first golf course designed by Ogrin, a 15-year PGA Tour veteran and winner of the 1996 Texas Open Championship. He is co-designing the course with Nugent Golf Associates. The daily-fee golf club will feature an 18-hole course stretching to over 7,400 yards and routed in three loops of six over a unique rolling terrain highlighted by an abundance of native pine trees and dense hardwood vegetation.

HARBOTTLE GETS WIS. DESIGN

MADISON, Wis. — John F. Harbottle III is beginning a new golf course design at Hawk's Landing, a 520-acre upscale real-estate development near Madison. The 7,000-yard layout sits on about 200 acres of gently rolling farmland, winding through hardwood groves and around three large ponds. Haen Real Estate of Madison is developing the project. Construction will be completed by Oliphant Golf Construction, Inc., also of Madison. A late summer/fall construction start is planned. Other new Harbottle projects include a new 27-hole course on the Ralph Ranch in Livermore, Calif., and another 27-hole facility, Hira Country Club, near Nagoya, Japan.

\$14M PROJECT PLANNED IN FLA.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, Fla. — Capital Golf Development Corp. has announced plans for a new golf club in Indian River County. The \$14 million project, Southern Dunes Golf Club, will feature a course designed by Kenneth Kavanaugh. Southern Dunes is located on the natural sand dune paralleling the Indian River Lagoon in Indian River County. Situated on more than 180 acres of land, the course provides 7,300 yards of golf from championship tees. It encompasses pine forests, water and sand dune topography. A special area of the course offers links-style golf. To accommodate golfers who enjoy walking, a caddie program will be in place. Construction is scheduled to begin in April. Course opening is set for January 2000.

Lowry 'builds' true island green



The island hole at Timber Lakes Golf Course presents a tough challenge to finish up the front nine

By MARK LESLIE

M T. OLIVE, Ill. — A real island green will face golfers when the new front nine of Timber Lakes Golf Course opens in May here, halfway between St. Louis and Springfield.

"Yes, the island green is unique," said Bill Lowry, owner of Professional Landscaping, Inc., who built the course and co-designed it with owner Mike Favre, "but it also has three peninsula greens, and I don't think you'll find that on any course, anywhere."

To play the peninsula greens, golfers will have to wait until fall, when the back nine opens. But the island green stands ready to test them as they come to the clubhouse to finish the front nine.

The 15,000-square-foot island was not always an island, Lowry said. It was a horseshoe-shaped peninsula with a 6- to 8-foot-wide "moat" until Lowry widened

the moat to 50 to 90 yards.

Lowry said the 6-acre lake was drained and then dug out in order to widen the moat. Water was 5 to 6 feet deep and now it is 30, he said.

Now the piece of land sits as an island, complete with trees and an 8,000-square-foot, three-level green for the 275- to 310-yard par-4 9th hole.

The approach shot from the landing area requires a 90-yard carry over the water. A 50-foot bridge takes golfers to and from the green, which can be seen from the clubhouse.

The back nine, Lowry said, is even more challenging than the front.

"The front nine is a 6 on a scale of 10 for difficulty. The back nine will be closer to an 8 or 9," he said. "The front nine is links style, while the back nine is carved out of the woods, uses natural terrain and of

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Golfers putt out on the 2nd hole on the Northwest Angle.

Northwest Angle: Golf like nowhere else

By TIMOTHY LYON

T he club scuffs the ground hard before impact and the ball bounces 20 yards down the recently mowed fairway. A soft curse registers more amazement than anger. George Risser readily acknowledges that his golf game could be better. In all honesty, if he handled his chainsaw and hunting rifle with the same proficiency that he wields a 5-iron, we'd probably be interviewing a one-armed man facing several involuntary manslaughter charges. Yet George Risser is "Mr. Golf" on the Northwest Angle, where his inability to putt or drive is overshadowed by the fact that he has established a legitimate nine-hole course in the middle of the most stubborn wilderness Minnesota has to offer.

Hacked from the popple groves and cedar swamps that choke the Angle, the course has the distinction of being the most northerly in the contiguous 48 states.

The tranquil air and groomed links belie the true character of what lays ahead. The fairways are narrow and lined with forest so dense that only those with a real affection for their Titleists make any effort to retrieve wayward slices. Tricky lake breezes push even fine shots into unplayable lies. And once you've survived the approach, the sand greens are another test. The course is an accurate reflection of the daily lives of the 60 or so Northwest Angle Country Club members.

"A dollar doesn't come easy up here," mused Risser as he confidently addressed another shot, "why should a par?"

Risser, a lifelong Angle resident who ran Pine Creek Pub Bar and Restaurant for 16 years and is in his 23rd year as postmaster, said the course was something he had always expected to do. The time, effort and money all lead back to George Risser. Locals helped with sweat

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IN THE WAKE OF SPLIT

Jones pickier; KLC eye diversity

By MARK LESLIE

PALO ALTO, Calif. — In the wake of his lead architects' departure, Robert Trent Jones Jr. said his golf course design firm will continue to work around the world, but on fewer projects.

Jones' statement came on the heels of an announcement that Don Knott, Gary Linn and Bruce Charlton have left the firm to form their own company, Knott, Linn, Charlton Design. The three had all worked for 18 years or longer with Jones in designing many of his 200 projects from Canada to China and from Fiji to Russia. A fourth member of the new partnership, Steve Schroeder, was RTJ II's vice president of operations.

"From my perspective, it gives me the chance to do more hands-on work on quality middle- to upper-end projects," Jones said. "We have had kind of a machine, grinding out a lot of golf courses because we had good people. I'd rather do six or eight projects a year that are very hands-on."

The change — for Jones as well as Knott, Linn and Charlton — is "a

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COMMENTARY

Golf's future bright

By DR. MICHAEL HURDZAN

I disagree, often, with people in the golf business who fail to see the big picture — or if they see it, refused to believe or to present a balanced view. Call it "the cup is half empty, half full" syndrome if you will. The fact is the damn cup is neither half empty or half full, rather it is both. Stick with me while I rebut an article from the sports section of the USA TODAY that appeared on Tuesday, January 19, 1999 titled "Glut of Layouts Forces Creative Marketing."

The essence of the story was a gloom and doom report about how the supply of golf courses has exceeded demand, and how operators have had to resort to marketing gimmicks to pull in customers. These are the views of the "half-empty" crowd.

But in a side bar chart it showed the rounds of golf for 1997 (the last year reported) had reached a record high of 544 million rounds, 14% higher than the previous year, and 18% higher than any year in the last century. This is how "half-full" folks see golf.

I unabashedly, am one of the world's great optimists (read half full), that believes that golf can grow at a reasonably high, sustainable rate if — if, we remember three

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COMMENTARY

## Hurdzan: Golf's future bright

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words — **affordable, accessible, sustainable.**

Affordable means providing golf facilities at a price that appeals to people at average income levels and below. Golf should be competitive in price to movie theaters, professional sports activities, or other amusement areas. Leisure activities are competing for discretionary time and money, so golf should not price itself out of the competition.

Accessible means providing a friendly, entry level introduction to the game in terms of learning the fundamentals of golf, and on facilities geared to their skill level. Bowling uses inflatable gutter guards, skiing has bunny slopes, and there is a nerf or whiffle type ball for nearly every sport, all of which helps beginners succeed as they learn.

Sustainable means building golf facilities that need only small amounts of water, fertilizers pesticides, fossil fuel, and human energy to run. Together, minimizing these inputs can not only make golf courses better neighbors to the environment; it can also keep the total of the cost of a round of golf to a very low level.

In the *USA Today* story, the picture that ran as part of the story was of Shadow Creek in Las Vegas, where 40 or 50 million dollars was spent to build it. It costs \$1,000 per round to play it and to sustain that golf course in that environment is a near miracle. If there is a problem with golf in America, it is that we are building too many Shadow Creeks.

For golf to continue to prosper and grow we as an industry must build a market, not simply service a market. In the 1950s and 1960s the Big-3 American auto manufacturers were of a mind that their only competition was each other, and that all they had to do was to out gimmick each other, and America would buy their cars. They were a servicing market.

No one cared about the weird little foreign cars that came out post war Europe and Japan. We called them bugs, upside roller skates, clown cars and several other unflattering things, and the Big 3 totally discounted these car companies with names like Volkswagen, Honda, Toyota, Datsun, and Subaru. But these little guys were building a market by providing low cost, fuel efficient, compact transportation when Detroit thought people only wanted power, luxury, and space. The import cars built a loyal market by providing well built, quality products that nearly

took down the automotive giants, and now the foreign companies dominate the luxury car market as well.

My point is that people who see golf as the trouble are those people who are servicing the market with expensive green fees, outrageously priced clubs and equipment, and cater to well-

heeled travelers. They have good reason to worry, for if the golf industry doesn't build affordable, accessible and sustainable golf courses, these companies will take their place with Studebaker, Packard and Edsel.

One can rhetorically debate which came first the chicken or the egg, but there should be no debate about which came first when discussing golfers and golf courses. Without a doubt golf

courses beget golfers. Build an affordable, accessible, sustainable golf course, even when market studies say no, and years later you'll find the best of paradises.

But editorial golf writers, who now think their jobs are in jeopardy, are happy to write about what a slump golf is in.

Enter the National Golf Foundation that does representative sampling and then tries to project

trends. A sample error can be magnified in projection that in turn can result in erroneous conclusions (that is why the US Supreme Court has ruled against sampling to estimate our nation's population).

For instance, how in the world can the NGF factor in the influence of El Nino, starter programs like First Tee and golf programs for school kids, and the effect of

Continued on next page

PREVENT  
GRUBS.  
STOP THEM IN  
THEIR TRACKS.  
OR MAKE SURE  
IT'S NOT EVEN  
AN ISSUE.

## Silva re-instills Raynor at Lookout Mnt.

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, Ga. — Back in 1991, when Tibby Gass was sorting through the attic of a recently deceased relative, she stumbled upon a set of golf course design plans — not just any plans, but a color rendering of Seth Raynor's original architectural blueprint for Lookout Mountain Golf Club.

Believing her discovery to be nothing more than a curious-but-small window on the past, Mrs. Gass framed the print and gave it to her husband, then-Lookout Mountain Green Chairman John "Sweetie" Gass, who in turn presented Raynor's schematic to the club.

For a time, this picture hung on a dark, mahogany wall in the men's grille at Lookout Mountain, waiting to be rediscovered yet again.

When Lookout member Doug Stein obliged, his discovery touched off a series of events which culminated last fall, when course architect

Brian Silva used Raynor's plans to complete a unique bunker and green restoration.

"We've still some work left to do. Brian still plans to restore two or three more greens in the Raynor style," said Stein. "But we've come a long, long way. Finding those plans was like something out of Treasure Island."

Originally called Fairyland Golf & Country Club, Lookout Mountain was not built on

Raynor's watch; the architect passed away before ground was ever broken, leaving his long-time lieutenant, Charles Banks, to supervise construction. The course opened for play in 1925 — without some 75 sand bunkers Raynor had envisioned.

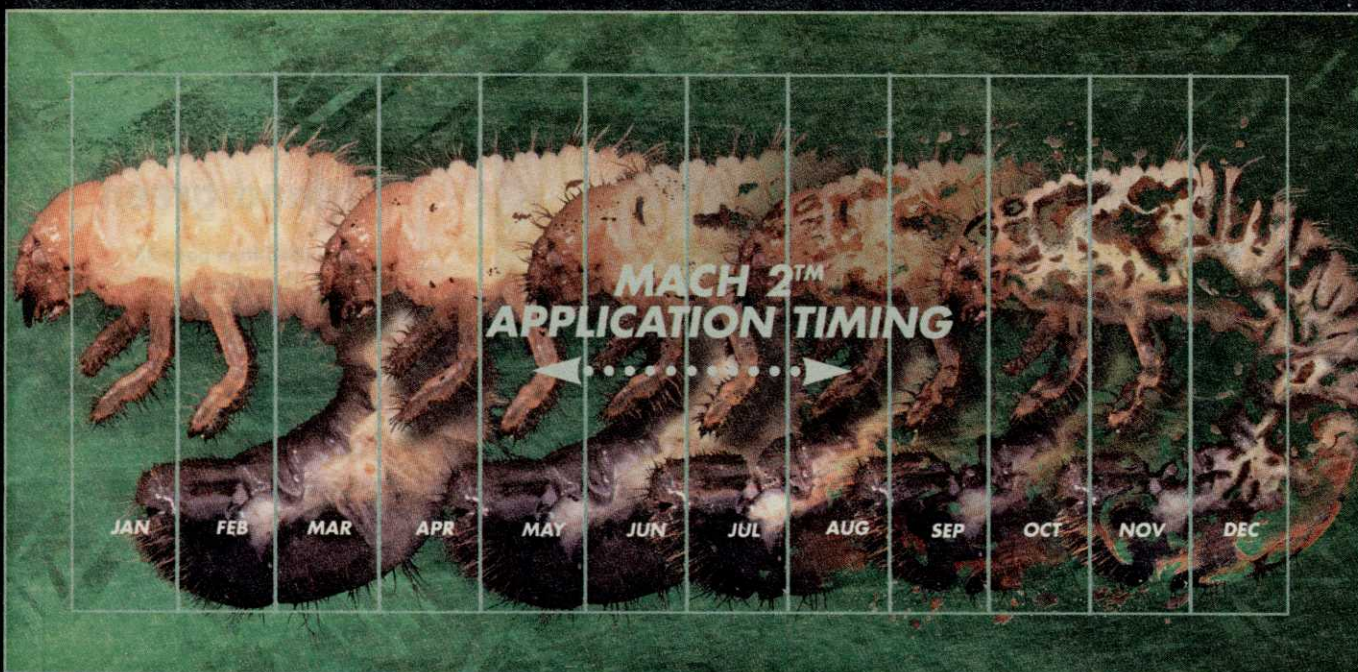
Recognizing these bunkers had been omitted, Stein and fellow member King Oehmig set about recreating what Raynor had in mind.

"Raynor's bunkers were largely flat-floored," said Silva, a partner with Uxbridge, Mass.-based Cornish, Silva and Mungeam, Inc. "They were designed to be deep and penal."

However, for Lookout Mountain members and those who know the course, Raynor's "new" fairway bunkers provide the biggest visual impact. "We added 55 fairway bunkers that weren't there a year ago," Silva said. "Think about adding so many bunkers to the fairways alone. That's a lot of bunkers. Yet they account for why Lookout Mountain looks more like a Raynor course today."

There is still work to be done at Lookout Mountain. This year, Silva plans to rebuild the 11th green and restore the 4th. Though Silva lives in suburban Boston, the remaining work will necessitate no special trips as he, Stein and Oehmig will soon break ground on a brand new course design.

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## Hurdzan comment

Continued from previous page

David Duval and Tiger Woods battle for number one like Sammy Sosa and Mark MaGwire did. I don't believe it is possible and in fact NGF is not predicting an end to golf, but rather they issued a veiled plea to build affordable, accessible, sustainable golf facilities. But bankers and wall-street types don't take the time to figure out what is implied; they react to what is said. So when a headline reads "Glut of Layouts..." they read that as golf courses are going to be harder to get, and golf may in fact experience a downturn.

This is a self-fulfilling prophecy and not necessarily a conclusion based on fact and logic. The net result is insidious and a threat to the potential growth that golf can, and should, enjoy.

The cup is neither half empty nor half full. It is what you want it to be, and if you are a writer looking for a story, saying golf is alive, doing well, and grow faster than the population is not sexy enough to get an editor's attention. As a golf course architect who has observed our industry for more than 40 years, it is my opinion that golf has never been stronger. The sky is not falling.