

BRIEFS



GRANITE ADDS 3

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.—Granite Golf Corp. has signed agreements to manage clubhouse and/or golf course operations at three additional Tennessee clubs: Colonial Country Club in



ACQUISITIONS

Memphis, Cookeville Country Club in Cookeville and The Farms Golf Club in

Dyersburg. Granite Golf also provides management services for Ridgeway Country Club in Memphis. Both Colonial Country Club and Cookeville Country Club are private, member owned clubs. The Farms Golf Club is a semi-private club.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADDS CHASE

CALABASAS, Calif.—Steve Chase has been appointed director of sales and marketing at Environmental Golf. Chase will be responsible for the management of all sales and marketing efforts for golf course properties. Chase joins Environmental Golf after 20 years as vice president of sales for California Sports, the parent company of the Los Angeles Lakers.

BROWN, CELANO JOIN GOLDEN BEAR

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla.—Golden Bear Club Services has hired Douglas Brown as general manager and Paul Celano as director of golf of TwinEagles Golf & Country Club in Naples, Fla. Brown joins Golden Bear from the Bay Colony Club in Naples, Fla., where he was club manager. Celano was most recently head professional at the Jack Nicklaus-designed Governors Club in Chapel Hill, N.C.

LINKSCORP, PALMER TEAM UP

NORTHFIELD, Ill.—LinksCorp, Inc. has signed an agreement to have Palmer Course Design Co. design a course at Hilton Head Island, S.C. To be called Crescent Pointe Golf Club, it is located in the new Centex real estate development just off Hilton Head Island. Development is already underway.

WESTERN GOLF NAMES CONTROLLER

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.—Western Golf Properties has named Joseph Pluto as controller for its corporate headquarters here. Prior to joining Western Golf, Pluto was controller for several manufacturing companies in Michigan, including Transportation Design and Manufacturing.

Atlanta group forms management/development firm

By PETER BLAIS

ATLANTA — Golf Industries Holding Corp. has formed a golf acquisition, development and management company based here and headed by principals Skip Smith, Mark Purtee and Arthur Jeffords.

Golf Industries' focus will be on the acquisition, development and management of daily-fee and semi-private courses and clubs. The company currently manages courses in Alabama and South Carolina and has several new facilities under consideration nationwide.

"We have a project in Houston that will break ground the first quarter; two potential acquisitions in Atlanta; two potential development opportunities in Virginia; two acquisitions we're trying to close in Orlando [Fla.]; and three acquisitions we're trying to close in the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale area," said Jeffords, the firm's director of operations and development. "We're trying to do six deals in 1999 and our schedule is six per year into the future."

Jeffords is a golf industry veteran of more than 25 years. He is a PGA member who was associated for more than 12 years with Sea Pines Plantation of Hilton Head Island, S.C., where he served as director of golf for the resort's four courses and as head professional at Harbour Town Golf Links, site of the PGA Tour's MCI Heritage Classic. He was a principal in a golf management and development firm whose most noted development was Wachesaw Plantation, Myrtle Beach's first private golf community. Along with other affiliations, Jeffords serves on the board of directors of the National Golf Course Owners Association.

Smith is the director of acquisitions and new business development. He will identify and scrutinize prospects for the firm.



Golf Industries' (left to right) Arthur Jeffords, Skip Smith and Mark Purtee.

Previously, Smith was a principal and general manager of Golf Property Associates, Inc., a firm involved in the sale, acquisition and analysis of golf properties throughout the United States. He holds a Principal Broker's real-estate license and is a veteran golf course and commercial real-estate broker with more than 25 years experience.

Purtee, a former financial consultant with Shearson Lehman Brothers, is director of finance and chief financial officer. For nine years he was a financial consultant specializing in the

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Survey finds private clubs performing well

WASHINGTON—Private clubs have generally been faring well in today's economy, according to a trends survey recently conducted by the National Club Association (NCA).

More than 90 percent of responding clubs indicated their memberships were either growing or stable. Results concerning the financial situation of clubs were similar, with 50 percent indicating the club's financial situation was improving and 41 percent stating it was stable.

The survey also asked a cross section of clubs to assess and rank current trends affecting the club industry. Competition for a shrinking labor force was a top concern of clubs, receiving an average importance rating of 4.5 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "very important." This was followed by demographic changes and population growth among the 45-54 age group, which received an importance rating of 4.2. The increased interest in the game of golf, rated at 4.2, and the growing focus on family-oriented activities in clubs, rated 4.1, were also important trends for clubs.

NCA Executive Vice President, Susanne R. Wegrzyn, noted that, "To further enhance our information resources to clubs, NCA will conduct a series of surveys in the future to assess operational, demographic and financial concerns of clubs."

Finding employees in a flush economy

By PETER BLAIS

ROCKLAND, Maine — In these flush economic times of low unemployment, finding and keeping good employees isn't easy, even in the golf business.

"The problem is we need people. The answer is to just wait for the recession. Then people will come to your door and you get to pick the ones you want," said Rick Grover, a professor at the University of Southern Maine, speaking with tongue firmly planted in cheek at the recent Maine Turfgrass Conference and Show here.

But how do you attract and keep good employees when jobs outnumber applicants, which is the case at many golf courses today? Grover checked with several superintendents who were having

some hiring success — including Jim Hodge of Val Halla Golf Course in Cumberland and Greg Grenert of Samoset Golf Club in Rockland — and married their thoughts with his own research on how to fill the needs of the various generational groups that make up today's work force. Superintendents who are best able to fill those needs are the ones most likely to attract and keep the best workers.

The generational groups can typically be divided as follows:

- Retirees, referred to as traditionalists, are generally classified as those born between 1920 and the end of World War II.

- Baby Boomers are those born be-

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Matching the right employee with the right job

By PETER BLAIS

ROCKPORT, Maine — While dividing workers into generational groupings provides some general insights into the needs and motivations of golf course workers, superintendents must remember that each individual possesses a different temperament that can cross and blur generational lines.

Speaking at the recent Maine Turfgrass Conference and Show, University of Southern Maine Professor Rick Grover further divided members of the three generational groups into four subcategories with various temperaments: guardian, rationalist, idealist, and artisan.

Superintendents can deal with workers more effectively if they realize these personality types determine the way one moves through life and why people respond the way they do, noted Grover, who made the following observations about the four sub-groups:

- Guardian — The fundamental need is to be a member of or to belong to something. Responsibility and duty are very important. These people often have trouble adjusting to retirement since they are no longer part of a large organization. Being able to call oneself a member of a particular golf course staff may fill an important need for guardians. These are responsible people who always show up and complete tasks on time. "If they say they'll have the green cut by 8 a.m., then it will definitely be cut by 8 a.m.," Grover said. Many golf course superintendents would likely classify themselves as members of this group.

- Rationalist — These people are driven by the need to learn and become increasingly competent. They don't care which organization they are with, as long as the organization provides the opportunity to learn. A superintendent needs to work with and

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Palmer targets corporate market

ORLANDO, Fla. — Recognizing the growing impact and opportunity of corporate golf, the Arnold Palmer Golf Academy has tailored its instruction experience for the business environment.

With PGA-certified professionals stationed at facilities across the country, Palmer is working with corporations such as Pennzoil, Paine Webber, Forbes Magazine, Dayton-Hudson-Marshall Fields, Office Depot, Cooper Tire and Hertz.

"The golf outing has become a modern staple of corporate culture," explained Brad Brewer, vice president/player development with Arnold Palmer Golf Academy, a division of Arnold Palmer Golf Management. "We've simply made it more practical for companies to take advantage of the resources we have here at Palmer."

"For example, we offer a learn-and-play program whereby a firm will come to The Bay Hill Club and stage a morning meeting. After breaking for lunch, the Academy will conduct a two-hour golf clinic for our corporate guests, followed by nine holes of golf at Bay Hill — with a Palmer instructor in each foursome."

"Many corporations will try to run this sort of business/golf meeting themselves, with mixed results. We've found that companies are eager to off-load the organizational responsibility to Palmer. This is our specific area of expertise; we'll do it right."

While the corporate outing business is hardly new, combining those outings with Academy-level instruction is. The Bay Hill Club is one of several clubs which routinely host Palmer Academy functions.

Another is the Palmer-managed Las Vegas International Golf Center, a 50-station Academy in the heart of downtown. Palmer also has licensed Academy relationships with the Saddlebrook Resort in Wesley Chapel, Fla., and The Bridges Golf Club in Bay St. Louis, Miss.

"One of the advantages of doing business with Palmer is the open door the Academy enjoys with the 32 courses operated by Arnold Palmer Golf Management — not to mention the 140 Palmer-designed courses around the world," Brewer explained.

Corporate programs are varied. One of the most popular is the 3- to 5-day Academy voucher, which corporations can offer to VIP vendors, or internally to their own executives.

"These firms entertain constantly," Brewer noted. "The vouchers allow them to say, 'Here: Have an Academy experi-

ence at Bay Hill, on us.' It's been a very big hit."

The voucher entitles each recipient to the complete Palmer Academy experience, which includes boutique lodgings at Bay Hill, personalized instruction and access to the course.

"Because we're flexible, several of our corporate clients have involved Palmer directly in their training programs," Brewer continued.

"For example, CNL [an Orlando-based funding institution] has made the Palmer Academy a division of their employee training program. We created a two-day 'Golf for Business' education program specifically tailored to CNL and its business. We also created a second dimension for CNL — a more comprehensive new player program which serves as an extension of its management orientation."

NGCOA marketing program hopes to increase golf rounds

CHARLESTON, S.C.—The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) has unveiled a comprehensive grassroots marketing program to increase the number of rounds played at member courses.

Market trends show that, while the number of golfers increased marginally over the past four years, the supply of golf courses continues to increase dramatically.

According to NGCOA, "Get Linked. Play Golf" is a marketing program that will provide NGCOA members with the tools necessary to grow their market share in the increasingly competitive business environment. By focusing on the message that golf builds relationships—family, social and business—the "Get Linked. Play Golf" program will help course owners overcome the hurdles that many beginning golfers face including expense, time constraints and intimidation.

"'Get Linked. Play Golf' will complement, not duplicate, the new player development initiatives of the USGA, World Golf Foundation and other golf associations," said Mike Hughes, NGCOA executive director. "Golf course owners are looking for creative ways to attract new players, grow participation in the game and increase the amount of play they see at their courses. We believe that this grassroots campaign is the way to accomplish that goal."

The message of the program is that golf is fun, entertaining, challenging and relaxing. Golf provides an opportunity to be outside, spend time with family and friends, and develop business connections. NGCOA members who participate in the program will receive a complete marketing kit that includes print advertisements, radio scripts, promotional ideas, public relations guidance, successful media buying strategies, and examples of direct mail pieces for order.

Hiring right

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tween the mid-1940s and mid-1960s.

• College students, commonly referred to as Generation X-ers, have birth dates falling between the mid-1960s to mid-1980s.

College students. Hodge has had success with college students by offering free golf and as flexible work schedules as possible, Grover noted. In general, Generation Xers value fun, flexibility, recognition and praise, opportunities to learn new things, and small rewards.

"Small rewards can be providing someone with a pizza or a sleeve of golf balls," Grover said. "These things may not mean a lot to you. But when delivered in response to a job well done, they can mean a lot to this group. If you need someone to stay late to get the course ready for a tournament, a small, quick reward can be effective. Word gets out and people begin to like to work for you."

Retirees. Grenert has tapped deeply

into this group. In a tourist area like Rockland, which has become increasingly dependent on September and October revenues for a successful season, retirees have the advantage of not having to return to school come Labor Day. The quality of their work is also generally excellent.

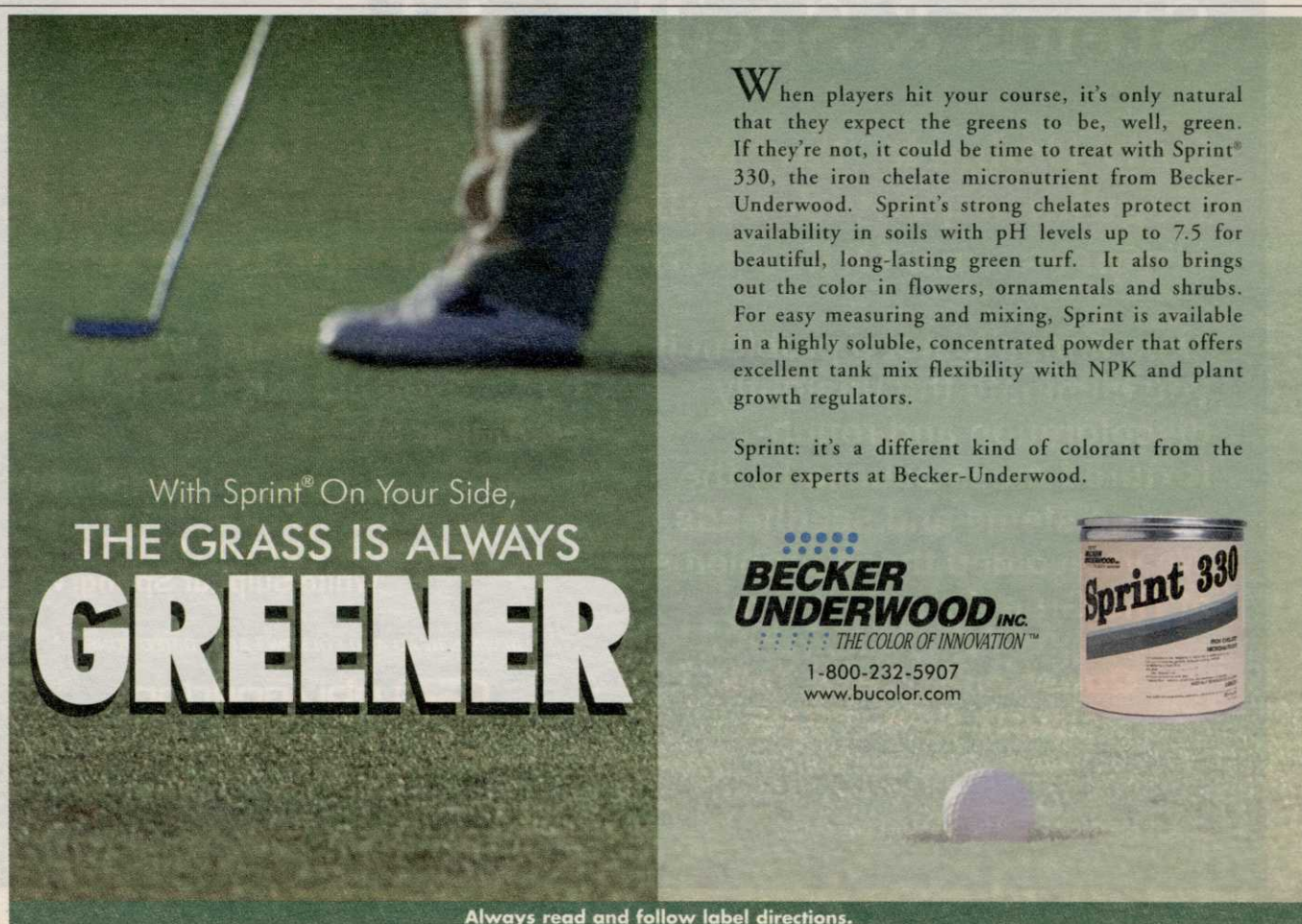
"Traditionalists prize security in terms of job, income and employment, Grover said. "They have a strong work ethic, believing that one should work every day. Retirement can be a tad uncomfortable for this group. Having grown up in the Depression, they know that good times can be followed by bad, that you can never be too careful. So, it's not a bad idea to continue working, and it's actually kind of a habit... You hear a lot of people in this group say something like 'I just couldn't sit around and do nothing, I'd go nuts.' Free golf is also attractive to this group."

Baby Boomers. This group is quite different. Boomers view work not only as a duty, but also as a means to financial wealth. This is the only one of the three groups for

which money is the driving force. Raising their pay would seem to be the logical way to attract and keep members this group. But there is more to it. Boomers want to be paid on the basis of performance, not seniority, a major difference from traditionalists. Boomers also tend to trust and respond to authority, despite some of the bumper stickers to the contrary left over from the 1960s and 1970s.

One group that is surprisingly overlooked by superintendents is students majoring in golf course management. Only a handful of superintendents at the Maine conference indicated their courses were sites for students seeking internships in golf course management.

"This represents one hell of an opportunity," Grover said. "The fact they have selected a career in this area, are very interested in the field and are highly motivated makes them excellent workers. Free golf and the ability to learn more about their chosen profession are primary motivators. Finding students living quarters they can afford can be the major challenge."



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