

By PETER BLAIS

CARRABASSETT VALLEY, Maine — American Skiing Co. (ASC), operators of Sugarloaf Golf Course here, has hired Robbie Hellstrom as course consultant to ensure that course maintenance at the mountain resort is properly handled and to assist in developing long-range plans for the facility, which has been ranked the state's top layout for the past

Hellstrom takes Sugarloaf reins

dozen years.

Hellstrom first visited Sugarloaf last October. While pleased with its No. 1 ranking, ASC hired Hellstrom to take Sugarloaf "to the next level."

"The course is 15, 16 years old," Hellstrom said. "They asked me to focus on what they needed to do to improve the

course and change some of the operating formats they have now. It's a true mountain course built 15 years ago when many of today's efficiencies of construction were still non-existent.

"Because of its environment, there are some things that have become significant challenges, such as the bunkers. In a moun-

tain environment you get a lot of blow-out and debris, so we're looking at a program to revitalize all the bunkers. We're looking to asphalt all the cart paths. We did four holes this July.

"We'll continue to work on drainage. A lot of the cross drainage has grown in over the years... We'll do an extensive program of re-ditching those drainage areas and diverting the water

Continued on page 16

Man for a season

Continued from previous page

up to his late teens. He was a hockey player who was good enough to be drafted by the Montreal Canadiens in 1982. "I didn't think I would ever be good enough to play in the NHL," Hellstrom remembered. "So I decided to continue to go to school."

His father hoped he would follow in his footsteps and become an engineer. But Hellstrom preferred working outdoors and got a summer job with a landscaper while he attended college at Marionapolis near Montreal. He enjoyed landscaping and earned a certificate in horticulture from Marionapolis. He received a full scholarship from the University of Helsinki in Finland, where he had lived until his family moved to Canada when he was 12. After earning a bachelor's degree in business and an associate's degree in agronomy at Helsinki, he went to work for a water park development company north of Montreal, where he cared for the grounds and pump stations.

While at the water park, he met former NHLer Dickie Moore who owned nearby Arundel Golf & Country Club. Moore asked Hellstrom to become his assistant superintendent. Hellstrom had yet to ever swing a golf club, but took the job working under head superintendent "Buster" Cooke.

"He (Stuart) was the most incredible person I ever met and the most influential person in my career," Hellstrom said. "He was 75 years old and looked like 50. And he could out-work any 20-year-old out there... Sharing the expertise this guy had from 35 years in the business was just phenomenal. I learned more in two years with him than I did in six years of school before that."

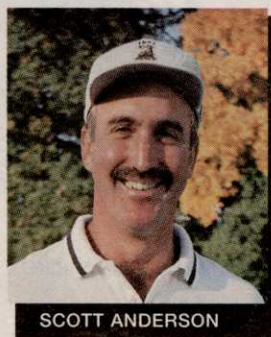
A gentleman named Houssain Soudavar was impressed with Arundel and hired Hellstrom to oversee construction of a new residential golf course he was building north of Montreal named Balmoral. "I hadn't done a full-blown course construction project to that point," Hellstrom said. "But we ended up getting the job done on time and on schedule."

Hellstrom stayed on as director of development once the course opened and became more involved with the other aspects of club operation as well — food and beverage, member services, pro shop.

Some officers from Intrawest played Balmoral in the summer of 1993 and approached Hellstrom later that year about helping develop golf at Mt. Tremblant. He was named to the board of directors in late 1993 and started overseeing development of Thomas Mc-Broom-designed Le Geant. He also worked on Intrawest properties at Mt. Stratton in Vermont and Gray Wolf in Panorama, B.C. ▶

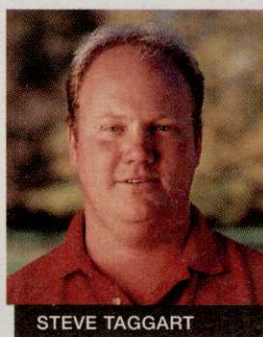
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Bear Trap Dunes hires Eric Linde

BETHANY BEACH, Del. — Bear Trap Dunes Golf Club, a new 18-hole par-72 course in Ocean View, has hired Eric M. Linde as superintendent and Houston Frey as his assistant.

A certified golf course superintendent, Linde holds a bachelor's degree in agronomy from Penn State University. He

worked as superintendent for many high-end courses, including Landsdowne Resort and Conference Center, Shenandoah Valley Golf Club and Farmington Country Club. He is a founding member of the Zoysiagrass Growers Association, has been active in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program, and has

spoken at various national and regional turfgrass conferences.

Frey comes to Bear Trap Dunes with a turfgrass degree from Rutgers University. His prior positions were assistant superintendent for Ocean City Golf and Yacht Club, and crew foreman for River Run Golf Club.

HENDERSON, Nev. — Lake Las Vegas Resort has hired Jeff Reid as superintendent of

SouthShore Golf Course.

Prior to joining Lake Las Vegas Resort, Reid worked at Spanish Trail Country Club, La Costa Resort & Spa, Carlton Oaks Country Club and Eaglecrest Country Club.

Reid is a graduate of Grossmont College, with a bachelor's degree in business administration. He also holds a golf and sports turf management degree from Cuyamaca College.

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Sanctuary Golf Course at Westworld, SunCor's new 18-hole, daily-fee golf club here, has named Rick Ulloa assistant superintendent.

Ulloa has more than 10 years experience, assisting in course construction, maintenance and management, serving at such courses as Hillcrest, Wildfire and Kierland golf clubs and The 500 Club Golf Course, all in Arizona.

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Golf Course Superintendent

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Sugarloaf hires

Continued from page 15

where it needs to go. We'll also put in some subsidiary drainage on fairway areas that in a mountain environment tend to collect and hold water. We're talking about adding three golf holes to the golf academy and building a clubhouse. We're putting together a three-year master plan."

Hellstrom will also assist in the possible development of a second 18-hole layout at Sugarloaf; help construct a new 18 at ASC's nearby Sunday River resort in Bethel; undertake a capital improvement program for maintenance equipment; and develop marketing and operational plans.

Hellstrom has a bachelor's degree in agronomy and describes turf management as his "passion, even though I haven't considered myself a superintendent for many years because I haven't been doing that specific job. I've been hired by companies to assist them in all aspects from construction to grow in to setting up the operational formats to building maintenance centers and clubhouses to purchasing equipment to guest services."

Hellstrom and Sugarloaf have a verbal agreement which results in his spending three to five days a week at the northern Maine resort. "When I'm not here, I pass on instructions to my assistant [Ryan Elliott] and foremen and let them do their jobs."

Hellstrom maintains a home and his office 50 miles north of Montreal. Intrawest remains one of Hellstrom's clients, meaning he works for the two largest ski resort companies in North America. He is also consulting at Montreal's Vallee des Fort, which is building a second 18 holes.

"We don't discuss Intrawest's business with ASC or ASC's business with Intrawest," Hellstrom said. "It's not that hard to balance. Both companies know that we're a consulting firm and don't have a problem with it. They aren't as competitive in golf as they are in skiing... I feel fortunate to work for two such great companies. People recognize it as a compliment to the services we deliver that these companies would both want to have us as consultants." ↑