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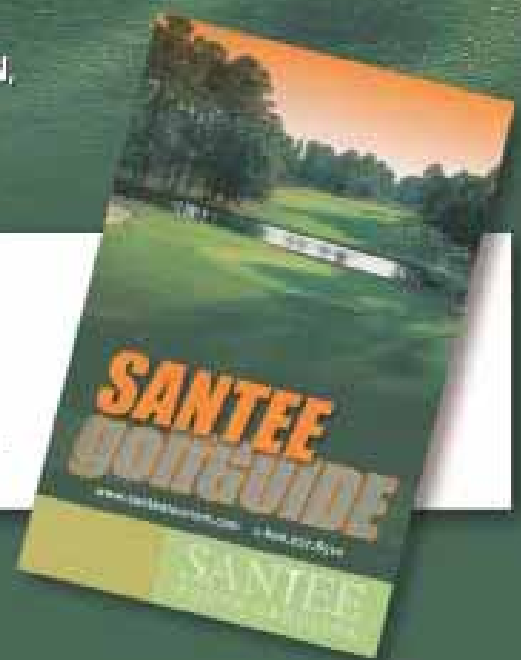
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Michigan Golfer - Jan / Feb issue

Coming January 1, 2004

Golf Show

ABOUT THE COVER: Bernhard Langer and Hal Sutton. Photo by Carter Sherline / Frog Prince Studios

Guest Editor

An Addict Says Goodbye

By John Bebow

I've taken to calling myself a "reformed golfer."

After too many buckets of range balls, too many poor performances in local tournaments, and too many lessons that were too expensive, I've given up the game except for the annual Father's Day grudge match with my dad.

Life's too short to have just one hobby. For years, golf was my obsession. I finally snapped in late summer 2001. After several weeks of horrendous play, it suddenly felt like work to lace up my FootJoys. So, I just stopped playing.

My two sets of Pings will soon go into storage as my wife and I move to Chicago in search of new adventures. I gave my shag bag to a friend who's just reaching the manic stage of golfoholism. I gave him a good number of my golf books, too. I'm keeping the memories of a youth (and adulthood) misspent on Michigan's golf playgrounds.

Here's a reformed addict's lessons for the many Michigan golfers who will never break the spell.

1. Play winter rules in March, when snow drifts still pack the front lips of bunkers.

2. Splurge on Arcadia Bluffs. Every year.

3. Give more mulligans and take more gimmes.

4. If you don't know where Concord Hills is, you're missing the best golf bargain in the state.

7. Pre-shot routines are for hopeless nerds.

8. Public course skins players have more fun. Strike up a match at Palmer Park in Detroit, Leslie Park in Ann Arbor, Ella Sharp Park in Jackson, Groesbeck in Lansing, or Milham Park in Kalamazoo.

9. Never get in a skins match with



Arcadia Bluffs

5. Stop wasting time on those pampered PGA millionaires every weekend. Turn off the tournaments and live a little.

6. Spend a summer night in the lodge at Hawkshead. Play at dawn the next day. Get off the course early enough for volley ball and a snow cone at South Haven's North Beach.

a realtor. They beat you on the first tee every time.

10. Did I mention Arcadia Bluffs?

Journalist John Bebow, 36, is leaving his lifelong home of Michigan to take a job at The Chicago Tribune. MG



***Ryder Cup
Captains
at Oakland Hills***

Oakland Hills photo by Dave Richards

By Terry Moore

In the current climate of strained international relations and global unrest, it was a relief to listen to Ryder Cup Captains Hal Sutton and Bernhard Langer sing each others' praises as gentlemen and good sports while reminding those in attendance at the Press Conference at Oakland Hills, that whatever the outcome of the matches next year, it's still "only a game." No less was expected at such a gathering of Ryder Cup officials and Oakland Hills club personnel who are poised to bring one of the biggest and most lucrative events in all of sports to the Detroit area next September.

However, at the same time, all this "sweetness and light" common to such preliminaries won't distract the Captains from focusing on their mutual goal: to win the 35th Ryder Cup Matches. PGA of America CEO Jim Awtrey humorously set the tone in his opening remarks by slyly suggesting to Sutton that he didn't need to remind him of the "strategic objective." (Or in the famous phrase of Oakland Raiders, owner Al Davis, "Just win, baby.") Later in the press conference, Sutton revealed just how much a feisty, tough-minded Captain he will be. He related how in 1999 at Brookline he told Captain Ben Crenshaw "to play to win" and not be overly concerned about the playing time of his individual players. Sutton reminded Crenshaw that "Europe plays to win." Sutton's spirited remarks later to his teammates at Brookline and Crenshaw's cagey front-loaded singles pairings helped to stage the biggest comeback in Ryder Cup history. So rest assured that Captain Hal will be playing all out "to win" next September.

Meanwhile, Bernhard Langer didn't quite quell a mini-controversy across the pond that began weeks ago when he said he would step



© Carter Sherline / Frog Prince Studios

aside as Captain if he qualified as a player. When hearing about this contingency, Nick Faldo then asked about Langer, "When does he change his mind? After the shirts have been selected or before?"

Langer backpedaled a bit on his earlier remarks, sensing the blood in the water for the ever-present tabloid sharks. "I've thought about it even more in the last few weeks," said Langer. "If I should play extremely well and qualified as no. 1 or no. 2, I would give it (playing) some consideration. But I don't think I will. I'm not playing well enough. I'm very committed to being the captain."

In any event, he won't be playing against Sutton whom he has beaten twice in Ryder Cup competition, once by a 5 and 4 margin in 1985 and again in 2002 by a 4 and 3 result, both times at The Belfry.

In his opening remarks, Sutton quipped about his losing record against Langer: "I think I owe him one. That goes without saying."

Other notes and quotes from the Oakland Hills Ryder Cup Press Conference:

- Both Captains assured fans there won't be a repeat of the ending of the recent Solheim Cup when a host of matches were conceded and not played out to their conclusion after Europe clinched the Cup. "Bernhard and I talked about that earlier today," said Sutton. "Everybody has bought their tickets and paid to see the action. We are going to continue the matches all the way to the 18th hole."

Bravo to that.

- On his philosophy of the playing time for any Ryder Cup "rookies" on the European team, Langer

said, "I don't think it's a good idea to leave rookies out of the matches until Sunday." (Note: Captain Mark James, to his later chagrin, kept out his rookies until Sunday at Brookline in 1999.)

• Langer and Sutton both agreed that Oakland Hills doesn't favor either team. Sutton said most Tour

option during the Ryder Cup of using markers set at only 300 yards, allowing the players to go for the green off the tee. This may prove to be a most exciting hole to watch, mindful of the driveable 10th hole at The Belfry.

• On what he has learned from observing previous Captains,

Oakland Hills: "When I drive into Oakland Hills, I feel golf."

• Best quote by Langer to sum up how he wants the matches to be conducted: "I want my team to play fair. I want my players to play by the rules. I don't want any gamesmanship or tricks. That said, the only other thing I will ask is that they play hard."

"When I drive into Oakland Hills, I feel golf."

players haven't played the course since the 1996 Open. So both teams should know the course the same. Langer said that three days of practice and the guidance of professional caddies will provide more than enough time and knowledge before the matches begin.

• There will be a new "up tee" on the par- four 6th hole at Oakland Hills South. Usually set back at 356 yards, there will now be the

Langer related how animated and involved Captain Seve Ballesteros was at Valderrama in '97. "When I was playing one hole and faced with a shot from the trees, Seve drove over in his cart and even tried to tell me how to hit the shot. But I played it my way and we ended up paring the hole. Every Captain has his style and I will have my style as well."

• Best quote by Sutton about

• On playing for one's country in the Ryder Cup, Sutton conjured up the ghost of President John F. Kennedy in his oft-quoted inaugural address by saying: "There is something lacking in American sports in general. It used to be our honor to be able to play for our country, rather than our country's honor to have us playing for them." **MG**

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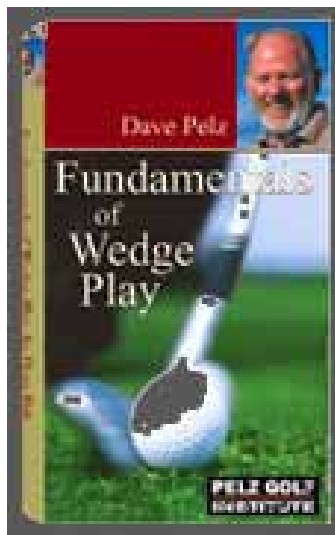
“Fundamentals of Wedge Play,” a video by Dave Pelz

By Terry Moore

If you're looking for wedge swing mechanics, then this video isn't for you. And that's not meant as a slam. To Dave Pelz, the key wedge fundamentals are in the way one practices, how one sizes up a particular shot, and how one executes it. You won't find any treatises on posture, ball position, weight shift, or hand action. Pelz leaves those matters to other instructors. (This is in spite of the fact that Pelz demonstrates a nifty repeatable wedge game himself.) No problem with that; just understand some of the basic premises here. With that in mind, I would say this video is best suited to and most useful for seasoned and better players.

In a nutshell, Pelz sees four vital components in successful wedge play: 1) See the shot—visualization; 2) Feel the shot—preview the shot; 3) Do the shot—execute; and 4) Hold it—see and learn from the shot. Pelz goes through some on-course examples of certain shots demonstrating these principles. He walks the viewer through a lob shot, a bunker shot and a bump-and-run. In an effective use of spe-

cial effects, Pelz shows how important it is to imagine the shot first before executing it. All good players do this and it's something crucial for sound play. Nothing



revolutionary at work here but the demonstration of the point is smartly conveyed by Pelz and his video producers.

Another salient tip made by Pelz is intertwining practice and play. He stresses to “practice like you play and play like you practice.”

Too many aspiring wedge mavens merely repeat hitting the same type of shot over and over again on the range. Pelz argues that seldom will you find two wedge or short game shots alike in the same round. As such, one's practice regimen with wedges must be equally diverse and varied. That's why Pelz recommends more short game practice out on the course instead of the range.

In many ways, this 60-minute tape centers on the mental and preparation side of the game. Building and adhering to a set routine is paramount. Pelz also makes effective use of Tour player tournament footage—Norman, Mickelson, O'Meara, and Elkington—and how they reflect his principles in their shot making. (Note: An LPGA player example would have been a smart inclusion.)

As long as one realizes the underlying premise of this video—that it is not mechanically-oriented—the viewer should be pleased and rewarded for watching this video. One more thing: the production values and video quality are first-rate.

For more information on this video, call 1-888-DAVE PELZ or visit www.pelzgold.com.



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Bethpage Black

“My best friend’s sister’s boyfriend’s brother’s girlfriend heard from this guy who knows this kid who’s going with a girl who saw Ferris pass-out at 31 Flavors last night.”

-- From Ferris Bueller’s Day Off

By Craig Brass

“My best friend’s sister’s boyfriend’s brother’s girlfriend heard from this guy who knows this kid who’s going with a girl who saw Ferris pass-out at 31 Flavors last night.”

-- From *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*

Often feel about that close to beginning to play a world-renowned golf course? A place of history, legend and lore.

Augusta. Cypress Point. Pine Valley. Hallowed grounds, placed on a pedestal of privacy and privilege with the requisite MEMBERS ONLY sign bolted on the front gate.

Fortunately, there are spectacular venues open to all. Pebble Beach, Pinehurst Number 2, the duo at Bandon Dunes and the current poster child for public play, and the number three ranked course on Golf Digest’s Top 100 Public Courses, the Black at Bethpage State Park in New York.

Prior to a recent trip to Manhattan I called a friend who’s



lived on Long Island by Bethpage for more than fifteen years. “I’m coming to town. Let’s play the Black.”

“Right,” is all he said, as if I’d asked him to set-me up with Jennifer Lopez.

After defending his commitment to the game and our friendship, he gave me the lowdown. There’s only one way to book an advance tee-time on the Black, call at 7:00 pm, one week in ahead of your desired tee-time and see what happens. Of course, that’s only for New York residents. For everyone

else it’s three days in advance. Fat chance.

The other way to get on is to call the day before and see if there’s been a cancellation, or just show-up and see if there’s an opening. Spots are held open each day for walk-ups, which is why the stories you’ve heard about people sleeping in cars for a chance at a tee-time are true. Quite frankly, I haven’t slept in my car since I tried to get tickets to see the Rolling Stones play the Masonic Temple in the early 1980’s and have no inclination to do so again.

"You've got to know somebody," I said, exasperated that in all those years my friend hadn't cultivated a route through New York's decidedly socialistic reservation process. "I mean, how long have the republican's been running that state?"

No dice. The procedure was fool and tamper proof. If I wanted to secure a spot on the Black I'd have to go at it the same way everyone else does. He offered to make the 7:00 pm call, but suggested we have a plan B—our odds weren't good.

Right.

I hold the belief that we're all only a few phone calls away from playing anywhere in the world, a sort-of six-degrees of separation of golf. Given that, I put my theory to the test.

The two worlds that I work in, investments and publishing, are both rooted in Manhattan. Someone in either realm would have had to run this gauntlet before, though I had concerns my friends in the arts were a tad soft when it came to this soft of conniving. Even so, we're talking about a golf course run by the state of New York. There's got to be someone getting greased on a daily basis.

"Can't happen."

"Not a chance."

"You don't know what you're getting into."

"Lose my number."

Peons. Mid-level wannabes. I cursed at myself for not starting at the top. It was time to go there.

I need to provide a disclaimer before I move on. As I write this there's hubbub in the media regarding the leak of a CIA agent's name. A major issue for those in the espi-

onage game, but a breach of national security is a two-inch, downhill putt compared to the furor that would be ignited if the names of my enablers were released.

Trust would certainly be violated, careers potentially ruined and a life may even be lost—very likely mine. Suffice to say, you've heard of at least one of them, perhaps a second, though I'll only refer to them as The Hook, The Shoe and The Mailman.

I instant-messaged The Hook, a man I'd gotten on Oakland Hills last year (one-degree of separation), whom had previously boasted of an inside track at Bethpage.

"I know some people," he wrote. "They play there all the time. Koreans. I'm sure they can get us on."

"North or South," I typed hesi-

tantly.

"Does it matter?"

It didn't. I had no problem treading on the axis of evil if it meant a tee-time guaranteed to get us in before dark. I was, however, apprehensive about the prospects. The international intrigue angle was a bit melodramatic.

I put a backup into play. A call went out to The Mailman, one of the most well connected figures in all of sports. I needed him to go up the ladder, to the guy who is sports, The Shoe.

"Are you on a cell? What are you, nuts?" The line went dead. Stupid me. I walked from my office and made another call from a pay phone at the Townsend Hotel. He was more accommodating.

"I haven't spoken to him in a long time," said The Mailman.

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“Give me a couple of days.”

This is what I’m talking about. An insider. A guy who can drop a dime for a friend.

A week went by. No word from the communists or the Shoe man. Troubling. My thoughts wandered to Shinnecock Hills or the National Golf Links. I’d probably have a time there already, more than likely playing with the pro or the club champ.

I got nervous and carelessly sent out a couple of inquisitive emails. The Mailman replied, “You think emails are safe? You’re more stupid than I’d imagined. Call me on a secure line.”

How do you determine if a line is secure or not? I panicked, and made a tee-time at a course in the Bronx where they claim Babe Ruth, Joe Louis, Willie Nelson, Willie Mays and The Three Stooges have played. Okay, I had a plan B. Or maybe Q.

I sent an overnight letter to The Mailman, informing him that I had his back up should The Shoe come up short. The next day I got a call. “The Shoe never fails. We’ve got two at 12:41.”

Two? Who only gets two spots? I told him I’d already gathered a foursome.

“Not only are you a moron, but you’re a greedy one to boot. Perhaps I should cancel. Maybe you’ll have more luck with the Koreans,” The Mailman said with a shrill laugh.

Bag it. I notified The Hook he was on the outside looking in, but

if he wanted, I had a spot where he could stride the same fairways once walked by Larry, Curly and Moe. I also reminded him he still owed me for Oakland Hills. Cold, yes, but this wasn’t about warm and cuddlies.

When the day came I picked-up The Mailman’s greens fee, \$34 for a New Yorker, \$60 for me. As they snapped a hospital-like bracelet around our wrists to prove we’d paid, I asked if I should get a hat or shirt for The Shoe as a token of my appreciation. The Mailman



Bethpage Black No. 4

denied such a person existed.

After warming up on the range we headed to the starters shed, where we walked into golf’s version of the New York Stock Exchange. A number of guys were attempting to restructure the rest of the afternoon’s starting times so they could play together.

Bids and offers went back and forth. It sounded as though there was ample consideration on the table. Everybody willing to move their tee-time was going to get their green fees paid for, along with “something extra” for the inconvenience. I passed. I’d spent twice as much as I just laid out to

play courses half as good as the Black.

The starter, somewhat oblivious to all of this, double-checked our receipts and names before clipping the orange plastic off our arms. He paired us with a couple of Koreans and told us we were on the tee.

Most of the fairways were cut about 25-yards wide (U.S. Open width) and curve left or right, putting a high premium on being able to work the ball. I never hit a second shot off any of them. The first cut of rough was at least three-inches long and seemingly double that where most of my drives came to a stop. The bunkers, fairway and green side, were massive, like the trying to play out of Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes.

The single element that kept the place from being in Open condition was green speed. They were very slow and that killed me. I left six

putts short in the throat.

I only managed to hit three greens in regulation, once out of a fairway bunker, on a par three and the last from the rough on 18, where I made a four-footer for my only birdie of the day to shoot 89.

Is this course, hallowed grounds of New York’s muni-player, the third best public course in the United States? I don’t know. I’m still trying to finagle a tee-time on the two ahead of it so I can compare. But there’s one thing I’m sure of, if you want to play the Black, you’re on your own. There’s no way in the world I can help you get a tee-time. **MG**

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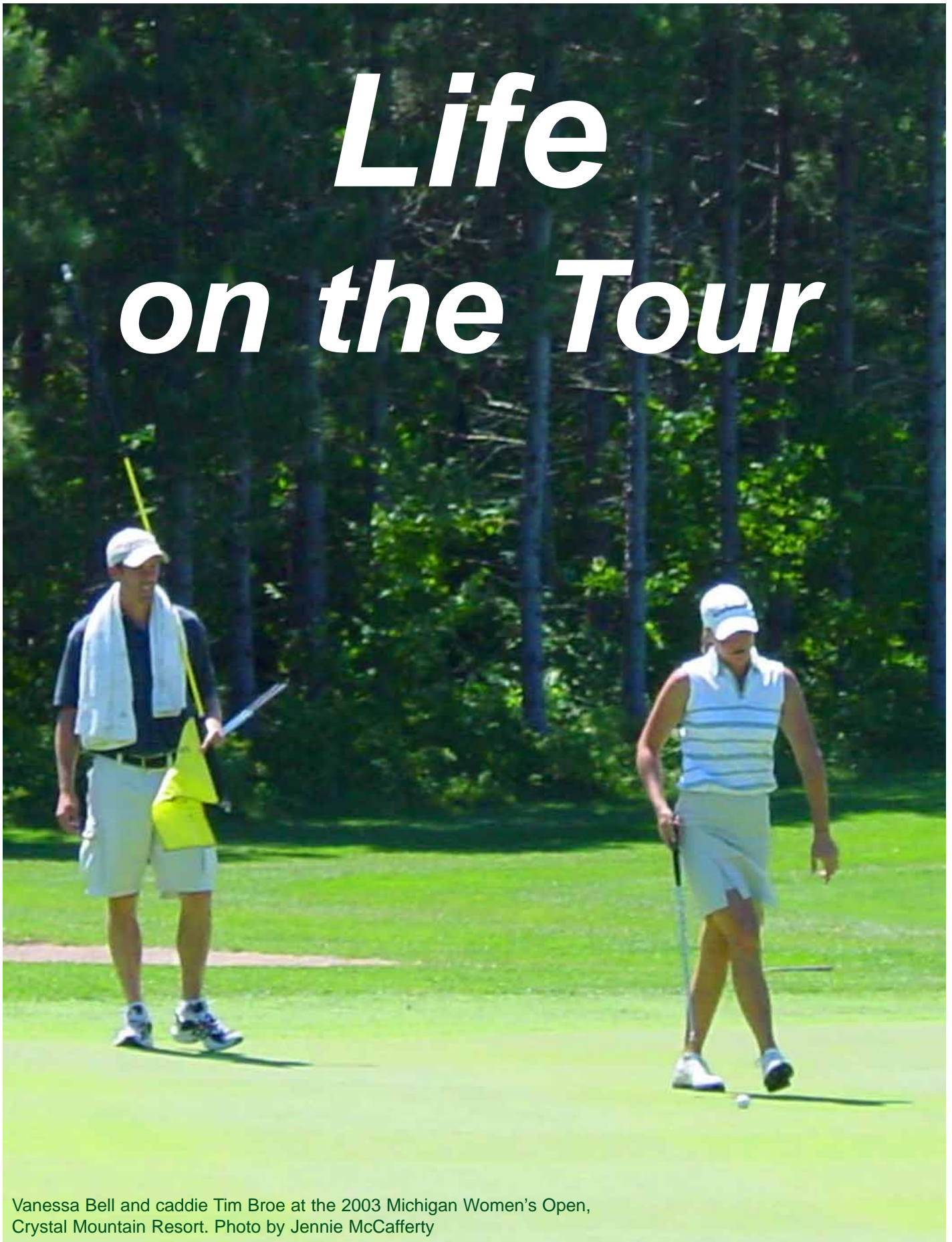


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Life on the Tour



Vanessa Bell and caddy Tim Broe at the 2003 Michigan Women's Open, Crystal Mountain Resort. Photo by Jennie McCafferty

By Vanessa Bell

For the majority of the players on the LPGA Tour, November is the month when they put away their clubs for a well-needed break, and a chance to do something else. For the rest of us still trying to realise our ultimate dream of making it to the LPGA Tour, November can be a very trying month. For those that feel their game is strong enough to test their skills at LPGA qualifying school for a tasty \$3,300 entry fee, that is their direction. For players like me who can't afford that luxury, qualifying for the Futures Tour, the official developmental tour of the LPGA, is the other direction. Either of the two directions will hopefully join paths with exempt status on the LPGA Tour. Depending on the year, normally finishing in the top 25 at qualifying school, or the top 5 on the Futures Tour money list, will secure a player their ultimate:- a place on the LPGA Tour.

My name is Vanessa Bell, and for as long as I can remember, playing on the LPGA Tour has been a dream. I started out this season with a somewhat limited playing opportunity on the Futures Tour. Due to this, making the top 5 on the money list seemed like an extremely tall order, so my goals for the season changed into making it a year to gain valuable experience playing in tournament conditions and learning to deal with life on the road.

Life out on tour can be a vicious circle. Unless you are a player who has accumulated numerous junior titles, college titles and all-American status at some point during your college career and break out almost immediately on tour, no one wants to sponsor you.

January to April, I was at home in England working to

earn money to pay for entry fees and travel expenses for the up and coming tournaments. Working to pay for expenses obviously takes away valuable practicing time, but if you are determined enough to work for your dream, it can be done, its just not ideal.

I arrived back in the USA at the end of April and by the second week in May I was driving to Pittsburgh, PA for my first tournament of the season, the US Women's Open qualifier. Strong winds, rain and a stomach full of nerves drove me straight into my first setback of missing the final qualifying place by 2 shots.

It always seems to be the long drive home that gets you pondering why you bother to work day in day out, drive hundreds of miles at the expense of your dwindling bank balance only to bang your



head against a brick wall. Then you remember your dream and the fire rekindles inside you and the very next day, you are back out practicing.

May and June took me to Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan. With a low budget, I had to pick and choose tournaments that were reasonably close by. Fortunately, the Futures Tour organises private

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*Per Person/Double Occupancy. Advance reservations required. Certain availability restrictions apply.

housing for players, which greatly cuts down costs for the week.

For the most part, it is a great opportunity to meet new people and you have to be ever thankful that a family would take a complete stranger into their home. The down side, and it is a small price to pay, is that sometimes the enthusiasm of your host realises itself in a tirade of questions about your day and performance. After a particularly difficult day on the course, a hot bath and a warm bed is all I want to face, but I am never so rude as to not converse with a family who have

July brought me to my highest point in professional golf to date. After working hard with my coach, consistent play at the Michigan Women's Open brought me to an 11th place finish and a decent cheque to boost the funds. The tournament was run with a truly professional flair: pro-ams, banquets and fabulous accommodation.

For the first time, my name was on the leader board and I could look at my progress and actually see that I was getting closer to my goal of winning.

dollars left to buy the shirt in the professional shop I had had my eye on all week.

As I was sitting in the hotel room this past week with my eyes barely open at 8 o'clock in the evening, it dawned on me people believe that being a tour professional is glamorous. During the season, my day consists of getting up when it is still dark, warming up for the day's round followed by practice, working out, eating dinner and finally flopping into bed at night, only to do the same thing the next day.

“ . . . for as long as I can remember, playing on the LPGA Tour has been a dream.”

taken me in. Reliving wayward drives and missed putts is bad enough in your own head, but to have to replay it out loud can sometimes make you feel even worse. At times like these, you wish that you had a sponsorship with an unlimited budget, and you were wallowing in the comforts of your own room at some swanky hotel. That is also part of the dream I suppose.

I've often heard people say that it only takes one win to give you that confidence to begin your journey to the top.

Although I didn't win that week, I moved on to the Illinois Women's Open with great confidence and finished tied 4th. It was exciting to make a cheque that covered the entry fee and travel and I think I even had a few extra

But golf can take you to some amazing places and personal heights. For me it's a job, but every morning I wake up looking forward to another day of it.

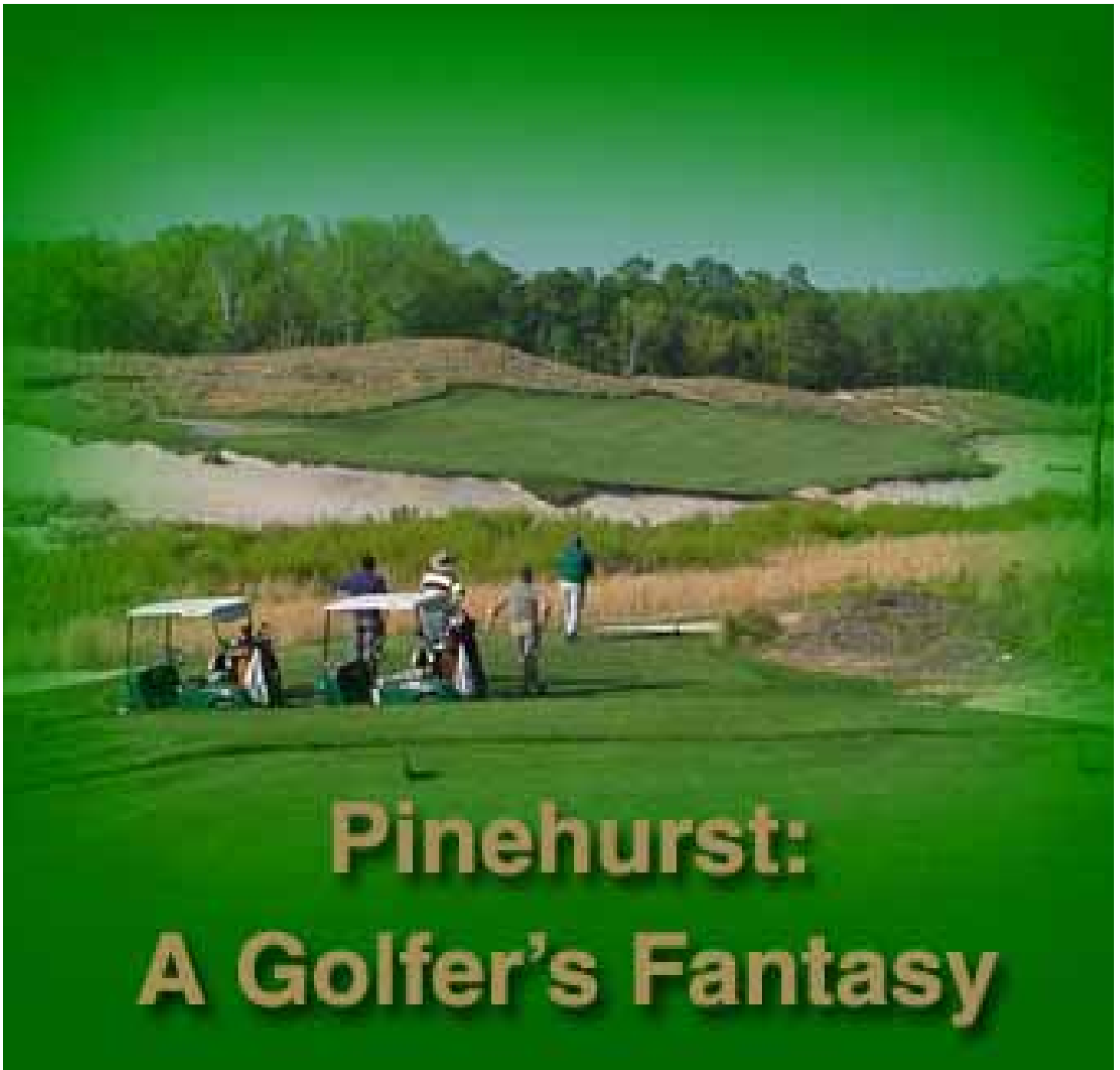
Vanessa Bell, a native of Ipswich, England, and graduate of the University of Alabama, is a 1997 NAIA All American in golf and a reporter for Michigan Golfer TV. MG



**Bank of Ann Arbor
2003 Futures Golf Classic
June 27, 2003**



michiangolfer.tv/2003shows/show14/



Pinehurst: A Golfer's Fantasy

By Tim Hygh

From the moment he walked up the dark tunnel steps into the light of the golf world's stage known as Pinehurst, he knew it would be a golfing day like no other. Times like this are marked by firsts: First trip to Indy; first professional baseball game with Dad, first Ryder Cup opening ceremonies...This day, too, was certain to produce life long memories.

Sure, he'd been there before, but that was with seven extra strokes of handicap saddled to his game. "Weak and right" described most of his shots back then, and he became more intimate with pine needles than fairways. It was a time when the game was new and exciting to him but his thin skills made it difficult to put the Pinehurst experience into proper perspective.

He knew now more about the hallowed ground he was walking on. The course simply known as Number 2 had meaning, plus he was about to be freed from all encumbrances. On this pristine spring morning, he had someone else carrying his bag - his first caddy. Dressed in classic caddy whites, she was ready to loop for what must have looked to her like a raw rabbit rookie.



Carolina Hotel, home of the Ryder Bar.

“Have you played here before?” she asked as he was trying to adjust to the new routine. He felt almost naked but in a good way because not having to cart or tote his own clubs would allow him to concentrate solely on the game and enjoying the round with his playing partners. “Yes, but it was years ago and in a downpour. In fact, we had to skip some holes on the back because it was so wet.”

“Then let’s hit a few on the range and get you to the chipping green. After all, this is Number 2,” she suggested without a hint of suggestion.

Great point. She was already earning her keep and getting him more comfortable with their new relationship. After all, Sportscenter and the Golf Channel couldn’t get enough of exposing the touring professionals playing a perverse game of boomerang with the touchy Donald Ross designed greens during the ’99 Open. Might be a good idea to prevent an episode like John Daily’s 11 on the short par-5 eighth hole. It would certainly be prudent to get

acquainted with the newly dubbed chipper of the day...his putter.

So after nervously flogging the first half dozen range balls with a new set of eyes on his swing, she wisely walked away. “I’ll be back in a minute then we’ll go chip a few,” she said. Miraculously, shots were now airborne and the comfort level went north yet another notch.

When she returned, he handed her his driver like he’d seen so many pros in person and on TV. As they walked toward the first tee it began to hit him that he was walking in the steps of golf giants and in the same fashion- Nicklaus with Angelo, Trevino with Herman, Faldo with Fanny. And then the idea was born that Pinehurst #2 with caddies is golf’s equivalent to baseball fantasy camps. Suddenly, he began to walk like he belonged in the moment. He looked around and imagined the throngs of fans along the ropes cheering as they did for Payne Stewart in ’99. He could hear the locals cheering for their favorites in the North and South Amateur Championship and he could sense

a golf fantasy like no other was just in front of him.

Of course, Pinehurst is golf’s fantasyland. Where else can you find eight courses that define every era from which they were built? Ross’s infamous cupped greens. Maple’s sense of subtlety. Fazio’s friendly rolling Carolina hospitality. Pinehurst has it all. The historic guest lodge at Holly Inn. The majestic Carolina Inn. A spa to keep pace with today’s finest resorts. The Ryder Cup Bar with historic reminders of what a wonderful team sport golf can be. The staff that genuinely cares for every need a weary traveler may have. The dining that satisfies every level of epicurean sophistication.

But, it’s the golf that brings them here in droves. It’s where you can fulfill the golf fantasy of dressing like a pro, walking a few inches taller with caddie at your side while playing with the golfing ghosts of the past in Hogan, Snead and Stewart.

He’s a bit startled when called to the first tee. Little does he know

what emotion the upcoming round will produce.

“375 yards...slight bend to the left” she says. “Keep it down the right center of the fairway. And good luck.” His mind is racing. The two-hour hop, skip and jump in his playing partner’s private jet, his new caddie watching every step. Is there enough ability to play the course and give it its proper due? Will he be able to keep up with his better skilled playing partners?

‘Watch the other three,’ he thinks, ‘and then graciously go last.’ Perfect.

middle of the first hole with the sun rising, the birds chirping and the plume of spring in the air. He pats his playing partner on the back and realizes they are sharing a moment like no other. The hairs on his arms stand on end as a wonderful start to a magical day on the course known simply world wide as #2 begins.

Others have told him playing with caddies would be special. And it was even more enjoyable than he imagined. She cleaned his CB-1’s, gave him yardages, read his putts and told him to believe the next shot was in his bag.

an ever-present security blanket for his current employer. Then there was Wallace. Said he caddied for the free golf. Hustled to every ball. His enthusiasm for the game poured over to everyone.

Other memories were made that day that now live vividly in his mind. The birdie on the eighth where Long John Daily carded an 11 in ’99 and a par on the signature 16th - the gutsy drive down the left side drew a “whew!” from her.

The double on 18 doesn’t diminish the experience. Chalk it up to trying to break 90. Or attempting

“... Pinehurst #2 with caddies is golf’s equivalent to baseball fantasy camps.”

Player one, the 8-handicap must also have the first-hole jitters. Two potential draws that weren’t listening end up in the right rough.

Player two, the birthday boy celebrating his 40th on #2 gets an early present with a left handed rocket down the middle. Player three, our host with the group’s highest golf handicap but a scratch in the boardroom, lands his educated fade right down the pike. It’s all coming into place.

Now it’s his turn to perform - to pick his target like hundreds have done daily for over 100 years hoping the plan turns into reality.

2-hundred and 25-right-down-the-middle-yards later he hands her the driver remembering once again there is no bag to shuttle, no cart to drive. He loves it when a plan comes together.

Hit it. Hand it. Walk it.

Time now for the days first set of goose bumps. He walks down the

And then she said what he had longed to hear. “Nice shot. Take a long walk with your putter.”

It came on the fifth hole. The number-one handicap hole, at that! A good drive down the left side and a 200-yard 7-wood left him 20 feet from birdie. This must be a fantasy. “Aim at the right side of the green and watch it roll up hill,” she advised. Correct again. 20 feet to go for birdie on the hole that has played the hardest for over 100 years including Ryder Cups and Majors was about to be mastered by a 14-handicapper. Incredible.

The other caddies all had distinct and different personalities. Billy the storyteller had a yarn for every shot his player was about to face. Were they true? Didn’t matter. They served as a constant reminder we were playing a century old course where greats and duffers alike have enjoyed themselves equally. Allan the rookie was quiet and reserved, always allowing Billy to set the stage yet serving as

to end the round in a blaze of glory like Payne did in ’99.

This round had it all: Three wonderful playing partners, a storied golf course where all golfers should spin their own tales, impeccable weather, and her – Cindy, the quiet caddy from Tennessee that made him forget his large handicap and his penchant for pulling it long and left. This day she made him feel like a pro.

Fantasy? He thinks not. Just a memory he will cherish forever.

Author’s note. The author made his trip to Pinehurst with R.D. Musser III, Ken Hayward and Bart Carrigan to celebrate Hayward’s 40th birthday. The trip took place the first week of April 2003. They flew privately and dined like Kings with the mentoring of Musser. Pinehurst treated them and all the guests they saw nobly. Nary a complaint was heard. Nor a sad face seen. Incredible feat in the height of peek season at America’s Golf Factory. MG

PDF Comes of Age



By Jennie McCafferty

Why PDF (portable document format)?

We can use a free PDF reader to read documents without having to own the software that created the document in the first place.

Later on, when the World Wide Web became one of our chief sources of information, some genius figured out how to make those PDF files available on the Web. We can publish documents, complete with photographs, charts and logos, without having to learn the html, xml and image formats that the Web requires.

As the software to create PDF files has advanced, we can create a PDF version of a *Michigan Golfer* issue – complete with ads and pho-

tographs and publish that on the Web.

But wait, there's a problem: the PDF version of the *Michigan Golfer* is a big file – one that lets you watch half of *West Wing* before it downloads.

The solution? Another advance in the software we use to create PDF files solves the big file problem. Actually, our "making-files-small" skills have advanced, too.

This issue of the *Michigan Golfer* is the first one designed specifically for the PDF format on the Web:

- The 2.2 megabyte file downloads fast – 20 times faster than the early versions. You can download the whole issue during a *West Wing* scene change.

- Articles don't jump. You can read all articles without having to look in the back of an issue.
- Links to World Wide Web articles, advertiser Web sites and Michigan Golfer TV shows are active. Click on a blue, underlined link or blue outlined image and the PDF file will take you to the Web site.
- Articles are designed to be easy to read on the screen.
- You can print the entire 32 page *Michigan Golfer* to read when you are off-line.

The PDF format allows us to read the *Michigan Golfer* on our computer screens, follow links, and visit golf courses via *Michigan Golfer TV*. The PDF format has come of age, and so has the *Michigan Golfer Online*. **MG**



Vanessa Bell,
Michigan Golfer TV reporter and
Futures Tour player
Photo by Carter Sherline / Frog Prince Studios

We are excited about the upcoming season on Michigan Golfer Television. Last year we projected 93,000 viewers for the year and will end up with over 115,000 viewers. This year we are projecting 200,000 viewers for our Michigan Golfer TV Show and over 350,000 for all of GLSP's Internet Television programming for 2004. We are on the grow.

Upcoming 2004 Shows

Walter Hagen - "The Haig Series"

- The Haig Remembers His Ryder Cups
- The Haig Returns to Traverse City

Events

- The Dick Weber Memorial Open
- Upper Peninsula Golf Courses
- The Michigan Golf Show
- The Arthur Hills Michigan Golf Trail
- Bay Mills Open 2004
- The Bank of Ann Arbor Futures Golf Classic 2004
- Tom Izzo & Steve Mariucci Golf Classic
- Ken Devine on the Ryder Cup
- The Ryder Cup
- The 102nd Western Amateur

Golfumentaries

- Chuck Kocsis - Michigan's Greatest Player
- Everett Kircher - Michigan's Legendary Visionary
- Michigan Golf History-19th Century Golf Courses

Now Showing

Walter Hagen - "The Haig Series"

- "The Haig", Vintage Club Golf Classic, Elmbrook GC, Traverse City
- The Haig Returns to Cadillac
- Walter Hagen and the Ryder Cup

Architects

- An Interview with Dave Richards & Ray Hearn
- A Michigan Golf Architect Family: Harley and Greg Hodges
- Ray Hearn and Paul Albanese
- Robert Trent Jones on Treetops
- Mike Husby: Designing Golf Courses
- An Interview with Ray Hearn
- An Interview with W. Bruce Matthews III
- An Interview with William Newcomb
- The Arthur Hills Michigan Golf Trail

Courses, Personalities

- Dave Pelz Opens Short Game School at Homestead
- Indiana Golf Hall of Fame
- Michigan Golf Hall Of Fame
- The Caddies of French Lick - Six Part Series
- The Bull at Pinehurst Farms, Wisconsin
- Timberstone Golf Course
- The Preserve Golf Course
- Pheasant Run's Newest Nine
- Craig Brass - How to Quit Golf
- Michaywe Pines Golf Course
- The Natural at Beaver Creek Resort
- A Tour of Wild Bluff Golf Course
- Quail Chase Golf Club, Louisville, KY
- The Tribute
- Wild Bluff Junior Golf Academy
- The Ryder Cup According to Jack Berry
- Jack Berry Discusses the Majors
- Jack Berry & Detroit Golf

Tournaments

- The 101st Western Amateur, Point O' Woods, Benton Harbor
- The Fifth Third Bank Michigan Women's Open, Crystal Mountain, 2003
- Detroit Newspapers Michigan Open, The Bear at Grand Traverse Resort, 2002 & 2003
- Bank of Ann Arbor FUTURES Golf Classic, Lake Forest GC, Ann Arbor, 2003
- The Bay Mills Open, Wild Bluff GC, 2003 & 2002
- Arnold Palmer - ESPN Par 3 Shootout, Treetops
- 2002 Michigan PGA Championship, Shanty Creek
- 2001 GAM Women's Senior Amateur Championship, Wild Bluff GC
- 8th Annual Jeff Daniels Comedy Golf Jam, Polo Fields, Ann Arbor

Destinations

- Traverse City, Park Place Hotel
- Trumbull County, Niles, Ohio
- Mississippi Golf
- Golfing Ontario
- Sandhills, North Carolina Golf



Jeff Daniels Comedy Golf Jam
Photo by Carter Sherline / Frog Prince Studios

A scenic view of a golf course. In the foreground, a calm pond reflects the surrounding landscape. The middle ground shows a lush green fairway with a prominent sand trap. The background is filled with tall, slender pine trees under a clear sky. The text "Santee South Carolina" is overlaid in a white, italicized serif font, followed by a horizontal line.

Santee South Carolina —

First hole, Santee Cooper Country Club,
photo courtesy of Lakeview Productions Golf Marketing, Inc.

— Reaching Out With Southern Hospitality to their Northern Golfers

A destination affordable to all!!!!

Golf in the Santee Cooper area of South Carolina may have been one of the Sunbelt's best-kept secrets, but not for long. Often overshadowed by its high profile neighbors Myrtle Beach to the east and Pinehurst to the north, the Santee Cooper area wants to make it-self known to golfers.

Taking to the greens could not be more affordable with golf packages starting as low as \$39.00 in non-peak periods to the \$70.00 range in peak periods. The packages include accommodations, golf, cart, and in most cases continental breakfast.

Located right of I-95 on the south shore of beautiful Lake Marion, there are over a dozen properties offering accommodations with golf packages including familiar names Howard Johnson Ashley Inn, Clark's Inn, Hampton Inns, Holiday Inn, Days Inn and Ramada Inn. Immediately in Santee are three championship golf courses, immediately means less than a 5-minute drive to golf. The Lake Marion Golf Course for some could be less than a 5-minute walk. A number of other golf courses that package with the Santee area accommodations are within 15 to 20 minutes of Santee, on the north side of Lake Marion.



Sixth hole, Lake Marion Golf Course,
photo courtesy of Lakeview Productions Golf Marketing, Inc.

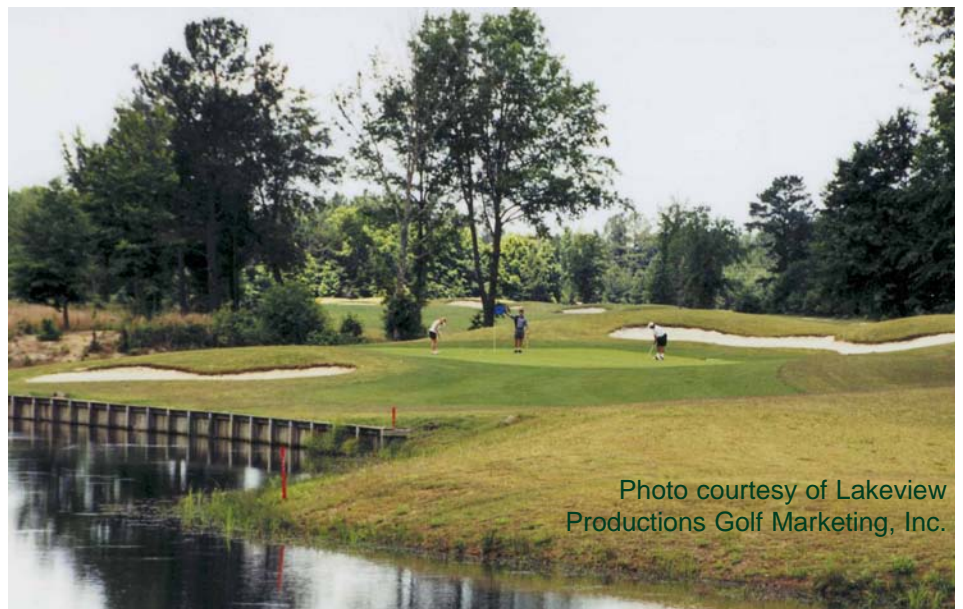


Photo courtesy of Lakeview
Productions Golf Marketing, Inc.



Photo courtesy of Lakeview Productions Golf Marketing, Inc.

Santee boasts 2 golf courses that have been rated 3 Stars by *Golf Digest*. Lake Marion Golf Course offers gently rolling hills, fairways are lined with South Carolina's majestic pines. Five holes bring water into play while 47 strategically placed bunkers challenge golfers course management skills. Stretching from 5,254 yards at the

front tees to 6,615 yards at the tips Lake Marion provides a good test of golf for the low handicapper and an enjoyable experience for the beginner as well.

Nowhere is the grand tradition of golf more evident than at Santee National Golf Club, with 2 distinctively different nine holes of golf.

A wide open and forgiving front 9 lulls you into a false sense of security before the tight fairways lead you through the Carolina pines and rolling hills on the back side. Five lakes provide plenty of hazards to test your skills. While four sets of tees stretching from 4,748 yards to almost 6,900 yards allow all levels of players to enjoy their day.

A chip shot away from sister course Lake Marion Golf Course is the beautiful Santee Cooper Country Club. This championship club offers a country club setting to both members and guests. Pines, oaks, dogwoods and doglegs, the course plays to a par of 72 at a length of just over 6,500 yards. The 18th hole provides a grand finish with a scenic view of the waters of Lake Marion.

Warm southern hospitality and good food and great rates make Santee and ideal golf destination for golfers looking for fall, winter and sprig get-a-ways. While in Santee, some dining suggestions that are you won't want to miss, Captain Kirk's Steak and Seafood Grill, Lone Star Barbecue & Mercantile, Jake's Barbecue Southern Barbeque, Clark's

Restaurant and the most popular and entertaining Coasters Sports Bar and Grill to name a few.

Moderate day time temperatures make golf a year round sport as Santee South Carolina is conveniently located in central South Carolina on I-95, approximately 1 1/2 hours west of Myrtle Beach and approx. 1 hour from Charleston SC. For more information on golf packages in the Santee area call 1-800-250-3080 **MG**

Arthur Hills Michigan Golf Trail

By Arthur McCafferty

The Arthur Hills Michigan Golf Trail is the dream of Phyllis Barone, of Golfer's Guide and Quentin Lutz, V.P. Global Business Development, Marketing and Media Relations of Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest and Associates. The Trail is scheduled for a launch at the 2004 Michigan Golf Show. ArtHills and Steve Forrest will be on hand to give it that special send off.

Why the trail? Why not.

The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Alabama has been a huge success from the moment the words came tumbling out of a marketing person's mouth. With so much advertising and marketing clutter concerning the 1000 plus golf courses in Michigan, the Arthur Hills Michigan Golf Trail will narrow down the choices for golfers next year.

But hey, instead of me rambling on, click on to the Michigan Golfer TV Show we did this month with Phyllis and Quentin at <http://www.michigan-golfer.tv/2003shows/arthurhills/>

The Arthur Hills Michigan Golf Trail will include some of the spectacular courses listed below.

Bay Harbor

Petoskey, 27 holes, 1998

The Arthur Hills Course at Boyne Highlands

Harbor Springs, 18 holes, 2000

Egypt Valley Country Club

Grand Rapids, 36 holes, 1989

Fieldstone Golf Club

Auburn Hills, 18 holes, 1998

Fox Hills Country Club – Golden Fox

Plymouth, 18 holes, 1988

Hawks Head

South Haven, 18 holes, 1996

Country Club of Jackson

Jackson, 3rd nine, 1989

Lakes of Taylor Golf Course

Taylor, 18 holes, 1995

The Legacy

Ottawa Lake, 18 holes, 1997

Lyon Oaks Golf Course

Wixom, 18 holes, 2002

The Moors

Portage, 18 holes, 1978

Oak Pointe – Honors

Brighton, 18 holes, 1992

Oakhurst Country Club

Clarkston, 18 holes, 1998

Pheasant Run Golf Course

Canton, 18 holes, 1994;
9 holes, 2002

Pine Trace

Rochester Hills, 18 holes, 1988

Red Hawk Golf Club

East Tawas, 18 holes, 1998

Riverview Highlands – Blue Nine

Riverview, 9 holes, 1980

Shepherd's Hollow Golf Club

Clarkston, 27 holes 2000

Stonebridge

Ann Arbor, 18 holes, 1990

Taylor Meadows Golf Course

Taylor, 18 holes, 1988

The Thoroughbred

Rothbury, 18 hole, 1992 - MG



Maggie Valley. Exceptional!



Maggie Valley Resort

By Thad Gutowski

We all have favorites. Mine include cashmere sweaters, Godiva chocolate, a medium-rare filet mignon and Maggie Valley Resort. I probably don't have to tell you what pleasures are received from the first three but if you haven't been there, a description of North Carolina's Maggie Valley might be in order.

Over the past two-score and ten I have had the enviable pleasure of visiting many of the world's more notable golf resorts both here and abroad: Pebble Beach, St. Andrews, the Greenbrier, to name just a few. Each is memorable for a very special reason. But, Maggie Valley in the Smokey Mountains delivers something truly unique, like cashmere and chocolate.

Imagine if you will: awakening in quiet valley with the sun com-

ing through misty mountain tops; a delicious breakfast on a veranda with beautiful golf course vistas and spectacular native flowers; teeing it up on a course that is not only challenging but a lot of fun; and finishing the day with a thirst-quenching libation followed by a gourmet dinner listening to great music. Can you really ask for more?

I remember hearing about Maggie Valley when it opened for business back in the early sixties. Let's face it, there weren't a lot of golfers then (about 5 million compared to 25 million today). The nation's interstate highway system was in its infancy and Michigan's first golf resort was years away. But in spite of its location in the mountain's of then remote western North Carolina, and away from the major population centers, Maggie Valley made its mark in the world of golf. For the past forty or so years, it has been a favorite destination for thousands of

golfers. Many have made the pilgrimage annually for decades. I am one of them.

Maggie Valley's 18 holes are a rare combination of fun and challenge – nine of each. The front-side winds through a beautiful tree lined valley surrounded by the Smokey Mountains, with just enough water to penalize an errant shot. Unlike many southern courses, the fairways here are green throughout the year as a result of a special blend of cool weather rye and Kentucky bluegrass. The greens are quite large and kept a little on the soft side to reward the well-executed approach shot. That's the fun part. The challenge begins when you tee it up on the back nine. Here the elevation changes are significant with many of the holes playing up or down the mountainside. Accuracy is paramount, but the views are breathtaking! Post those birdies on the opening holes because they might be rare coming in.

But there is more to a great golf vacation than hitting a round small dimpled object. A lot more! And here again Maggie Valley delivers.

The condominium-style Mountain Chase Villas opened last year and are a spectacular addition to the lodging accommodations at Maggie Valley. Each is exceptionally appointed, designer-furnished, and just a wedge shot from the first tee. On the backside and away from it all are the Guest Villas - fully furnished individual units with living room, dining room, and kitchen, with one or two bedrooms, each with private baths. Convenient to everything are the quiet and comfortable rooms in the Guest Lodge, all with a private balcony and great views.

Dining in the Grand Lodge Room at Maggie Valley is an

exceptional experience - the menu is extensive and is sure to satisfy the most discriminating epicurean. The wide-angle view of the course, Carolina blue skies, and the misty mountains through the huge windows, are beyond compare. All this plus great piano music by Steve Whiddon, who possess not only style, but also a staggering ability to fulfill almost any request. And, that after-dinner drink in the Pin-High Pub is a wonderful way to wind up a perfect day.

What adds a dimension to this resort that most don't have is the staff, which is truly outstanding. Talk about Southern hospitality? Maggie Valley invented it! Managing Partner Ray Hobby has done a masterful job in assembling a most gracious group of conscientious experts in their field. One is Teresa Smith who heads up the sales effort and is exceptionally eager to make every visitor to Maggie Valley

want to come back again and again. Quite simply, from check-in to checkout, guests experience the very finest golf, dining, lodging, scenery and service.

And here's more good news, the Maggie Valley experience is just a comfortable nine-hour drive away, with almost the entire journey on two interstate highways: I-75 and I-40. Incidentally many Michigan golfers make this a favorite stop on their automobile trips to and from South Carolina, Florida and other points south.

So what's all this extra special care and consideration going to cost? A lot less than you might think! Maggie Valley has a plethora of golf packages that will fit any budget. Log on to maggievalleyresort.com for the latest offers and then dial 800.438.3861 to book an exceptional golf vacation you will forever cherish. **MG**

Park Place Hotel

*Downtown
Traverse City, Michigan*

Some of the finest vineyards of Michigan are nestled within 2 peninsulas, just minutes from our doors. Plan a weekend or a day trip touring these lovely sites and discover the diversity of Michigan wines by visiting winery tasting rooms. Then enjoy Traverse City Golf, and experience our breathtaking vistas, lush fairways and blue waters, which leave golfers anxious to play again and again.

When you "Sip and Chip" at the PPH, you get two nights in a deluxe king bedded room, a delicious dinner and bottle of wine for 2 in Minerva's Restaurant, and golf for two at your choice of 8 of the Traverse City areas finest courses. . . all for less than \$300, including tax and tip. This special price is good through the end of 2003 golf season. Call today for availability and reservations at

231-946-5196
www.park-place-hotel.com

Ted Frey: Successful at Golf & More

Editor's Note- Jim Heil was one of MG's great writers. We were all saddened when he drowned in a kayaking accident near the Mackinaw Straits on Saturday in mid September in 2002. In researching Looking Back stories, I decided to run the terrific story Jim did on Ted Frey and his wonderful course, Little Traverse Bay. It originally appeared in the July 1998 Michigan Golfer. As always, Jim tells a great story. Jim, we miss you.

By Jim Heil

Ted Frey Jr. had no aspirations of triggering a boom in upscale golf course development when he left his native Grand Rapids for Northern Michigan in 1979.

Frey's financial interests at the time revolved around a number of commercial properties he developed in the Grand Rapids area, all unrelated to golf. And his personal interests were far removed from golf, a game he wouldn't take up until settling into the country-club confines of Birchwood Farms near Harbor Springs. But when Frey first walked the future site of Little Traverse Bay Golf Club in 1981, little did he know he would eventually buy the 290-acre property and turn it into what he today calls "one of the prettiest golf courses in the United States."

Before neighboring Bay Harbor and Crooked Tree Golf Club were conceptualized, Frey, now 54 and handicapped at "a dangerous 14," was first to capitalize on the panoramic views of Little Traverse



Ted Frey, Jr.

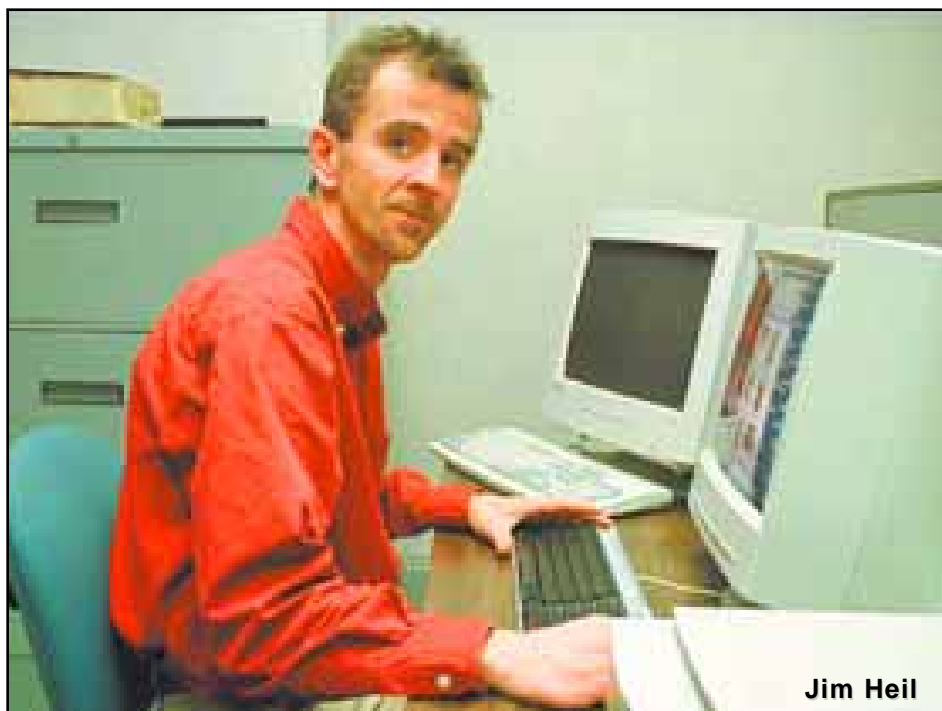
Bay from the perspective of tees and greens.

Little Traverse Bay Golf Club opened the first of its 18 holes in 1990, ushering in a decade that would reshape the region's image as a top-flight summer golf destination. "It was really a fluke - I did not intend to get in the golf business," Frey said in a phone call from his Jupiter Island, Fla., winter home.

"The property became available, it had a good value and that's how I got in the golf business."

Frey's knack for investing wisely is apparently a family trait. His father, the late Edward Frey Sr., prospered through his holdings in Foremost Insurance, an industry leader in insuring mobile homes and recreational vehicles.

A 1963 Ottawa Hills High School graduate, Ted Frey Jr. found a niche in the construction lending area of the banking industry despite never earning a college degree. He left banking in the late



Jim Heil

1970s and developed properties including the Federal Square office building in downtown Grand Rapids and the Thornapple Village Inn in Ada. Even though his parents were Kent Country Club members, Frey had devoted his summer recreational interests to sailing in his youth, starting off in dinghy races on Reeds Lake at age 12 and moving up to larger regattas like the Port Huron-to-Mackinac.

It was during his recovery from a fifth back operation that Frey moved to Harbor Springs, where he developed Emmet Brick and Block among other properties. He played his first round of golf at the age of 36, and before long was sitting on the Michigan PGA advisory committee.

Yet when another developer tried to entice Frey into becoming part of a residential golf project on the highlands northeast of Little Traverse Bay, he balked.

"I did not think the golf course he was thinking about had any great, endearing qualities," Frey said.

"I just had no need to get involved at that juncture." Frey's initial reluctance would bear fruit years later. The property went through a series of developers, and when the property became available through a failed savings and loan, Frey bought it from the federal government on Feb. 28, 1989.

"It was a good value - let's put it that way - in today's market," Frey said when asked of the purchase price.

"I wrote the check and said let's go."

The timing of the acquisition wasn't ideal for Frey. His father died in 1988, and his mother followed in 1989. Their deaths left Frey involved in the liquidation of

his family's stake in Foremost Insurance.

Yet Frey insisted all along in being directly involved in the building of Little Traverse Golf Club, of which he would be sole owner. He assembled a team that included course architect Keith Gorney, Michigan State agronomist Charles Menefee and local amateur golfer Phil Harrison.

And Frey banked on his own experiences of having played about 75 of the top 100 golf courses in America.

"I think we saved a bunch of money because we were there every day," Frey said.

"The only way to control costs is to be there, and it's hard to delegate that."

From the start, Frey the focus of the project to be solely on golf. Unlike so many other course developers of the day, he had no inclination to build plush houses and condos along fairways as a means of attracting investors.

"We wanted to build the best golf course we could, on whatever land I owned," he said.

The challenge of the first construction season brought a few headaches, most of them precipitated by nature. Frey figures it rained 12 of 16 weekends the summer of 1989.

But there was little altering of the natural topography. Aside from the moving of some 200,000 cubic yards of earth on the 15th hole, the property was largely left in its original state, preserving the views that would attract legions of golfers.

The final design of Little Traverse Bay Golf Club provided for generous tee settings - with no out-of-bounds to the right - on

holes that especially reward golfers who are proficient on their second shots.

"The real hard part of the golf course is the second shot, because of the terrain and the up-and-down hills and a little bit of wind factor," Frey said.

The golf course and its Victorian-style pro shop/restaurant were built in harmony with the nearby resort communities of Wequetonsing and Harbor Point, Frey said.

It's little wonder he prefers the older designs to the signature styles of today. If there's a sense of community at the club, it isn't in the form of residency.

Frey held to his plan of building a golf course lined by trees, not homes. "The golf course was laid out without ever thinking about potential housing," Frey said. "It's the type of golf course that you don't see other people except on the hole that you're playing."

Away from golf and business, Frey is treasurer of the Grand Rapids-based Frey Foundation, one of the largest private foundations in West Michigan. Created from Edward Frey Sr.'s riches at the time of his wife's death, the Frey Foundation listed assets of \$138 million at the end of 1997. Last year it reported gifts of about \$6 million.

Frey plays Little Traverse Bay Golf Club only a dozen or so times a year. He's more apt to play at Wequetonsing than on his home course. "When I'm on the golf course (at Little Traverse), I'm working. I'm making mental notes to myself," Frey said. "It's hard to enjoy golf at your own place. If I want to have a fun game of golf, I have to go someplace else."

"I think golf is a great game . . . let as many people play it as possible." *MG*

SLICE OF LIFE



By Terry Moore
Editor Emeritus

When mulling over this column, the following events were considered:

1.) Last Sunday, I watched (on TV) Stuart Appleby defeat Scott McCarron in a playoff to win the Las Vegas Invitational.

2) Yesterday, I tried to reach some local club pro cronies and discovered they were both competing in a pro-am event in Las Vegas. They'll be gone all week.

3) And today, I opened my Visa bill and noticed there were a number of charges, all accurate by the way, listed for my visit last month to where else? Yes, Las Vegas.

All of this is telling me is that I'm compelled by forces beyond my control to write about Las Vegas. It's in the (tarot) cards, so to speak. For background, I have been to Las Vegas on two other occasions. The first time was in the late '70s when my wife and I attended a national convention. We stayed at the old Aladdin Hotel where we were greeted one day in the lobby by the Olympic weightlifting gold medal winner in the Super-Heavyweight class, the USSR's Vasily Alexeyev. In addition to the many edifying and professionally-rewarding benefits of the convention's educational program (the preceding was written at the urging of my tax attorney), we enjoyed the usual diversions of the famed desert city in the middle of nowhere: gambled a bit; went to some shows (how about this duo: comedian and star of "Welcome Back, Kotter" Gabe Kaplan and the singer Anne Murray? Is that a time capsule for you?); and even visited good ole Hoover Dam. Your typical tourist and conventioner pursuits.

We didn't even think about playing golf. Yet, we had a grand time.

Then 10 years ago, we returned to Las Vegas through some good luck. How's that for irony? My dear and beautiful spouse, ever open to supporting a charitable cause, bought a raffle ticket for an all-expense weekend golf getaway for four to Las Vegas. Yippee, we won! So off we went with another couple where we stayed at both the recently opened and most spectacular Treasure Island and Mirage Hotels.

(At this time I should pose this question to all readers: aren't you glad I'm not showing you my Vegas travel slides??)

Anyway on this trip, we were all amazed at the emergence of the "mega casinos" such as MGM, Luxor, The Mirage, Treasure Island et al that dominated the skyline. They were indeed tourist attractions in their own right. We took in some shows, most notably Cirque De Soleil's "Mystere" at Treasure Island. It was a mesmerizing show and hooked us forever on this amazing company of performers. We gambled at the slots and at blackjack and inevitably lost our allotted gambling budget. And one day we rented a car and drove several hours to take in the breathtaking beauty of Zion National Park in Utah. (A must visit if you're so disposed to such outdoor excursions.) Oh yes, we even played some golf, compliments of that fortuitous raffle ticket. Given that it was in June, the daytime temperatures were somewhat uncomfortable to play golf in the mid-day sun. But we took carts, kept in the shade as much as possible, and drank lots of water. My lucky spouse recorded this nifty feat: she matched the day's high temperature by carding 107 for 18 holes. Take that, Annika! Again, we had a nice time and we promised to visit Las Vegas sooner than later.

Well "sooner" for me came last month when I traveled back to Las Vegas for a weekend jaunt. Once more, I was taken aback at how much Las Vegas had grown. The sidewalks and casinos were packed with people. ("What recession?" I kept asking myself.) I stayed again at Treasure Island and was very pleased with the room and the service. And while at Treasure Island I even had fair fortune while having breakfast at the most modest of games: Keno. This was just before one of my golf buddies mocked me as I blackened four numbers out of a possible 80 on the Keno card, "What's next for you? Bingo?" To his chagrin, those four numbers were drawn at random, defying all oddsmakers. So my humble little wager of \$2 earned a whopping return of \$230! Naturally, I told my buddy I would gladly bankroll him for his first game of Bingo.

Actually, I used those winnings to offset some "business expenses" on the golf courses where I was overmatched and overwhelmed by some sandbaggers. But at least I liked the golf course: DragonRidge Country Club in Henderson some 20 minutes driving time from the Strip. Built into the McCullough Mountains, DragonRidge is a most popular layout for locals and for the savvy golf traveler. Designed by Jay Morrish and David Druzisky, DragonRidge is smartly conceived as it takes full advantage of the rugged and scenic topography. Most of the holes snake their way through natural hills and valleys with added doses of desert washes, big bunkers, and man-made water hazards. The back side is the tougher than the front, tighter off the tee and around the green complexes. In spite of the fact there are a few holes on the back side that are tricky for first-

timers, it's a fair and not too penal test of golf. Druzisky has been quoted as saying the course plays like a "storyline," steadily building and revealing its character and mettle until the climax of the final holes. Well, I can vouch for all of that as our group was one of the last to tee off in the afternoon. As a result, as dusk fell and our foursome hurried to beat the darkness, we marveled at the terrific sight of the twinkling and gleaming Las Vegas valley below us. It's a fabulous view and quite the ending for a most enjoyable golf course.

Like Las Vegas nightlife, there is a golf course there to fit anyone's budget and proclivities. You have higher-roller, exclusive layouts like the famed Shadow Creek in Las Vegas designed by Tom Fazio or Cascata GC designed by Rees Jones in Boulder City—both aimed at serving well-heeled guests of the respective gaming hotels such as The Mirage and Park Place. And I played neither of them. But if you want to be a "high-roller for a day" you can play such notable tracks as Bali Hai, Reflection Bay, Bear's Best and Royal Links—all larger-than-life golf attractions. In all, there are over 50 courses in southern Nevada and like Michigan it too is encountering the pressures and fallout of overcapacity a.k.a. too many courses built too fast. But the good news for golf travelers is that there are bargains to be had if you search the internet and golf websites about Las Vegas.

But remember: whatever money you might save on securing a great deal on the links you'll surely give back in the casinos. It's all a matter of currency circulation.

One final note: two shows in Vegas I highly recommend are Danny Gans at The Mirage and "O" at Bellagio. Gans has been voted the "Entertainer of the Year" in Vegas and for good reason. He's a gifted performer and one with wide audience appeal. The guy next to me before the start of the show, proudly said, "This is my eight time seeing Danny Gans." I replied, "Well, this guy must be very, very good or you have lived a very small life, my friend." Thankfully, the guy had a good sense of humor. He also had a good sense of entertainment because Gans delivers a first-class show, filled with humorous and spot-on singing impressions of the top names in music and show business. Meanwhile at the Bellagio, Cirque de Soleil's "O" is also a spectacular show. The stagecraft of 74 synchronized swimmers, trapeze artists and contortionists all working on an amazing stage that can transform itself in a flash and hold 2.5 million gallons of water is unparalleled. It'll even make you forget those two drowned golf balls on the 18th hole earlier in the day.

For more information about Las Vegas, visit www.lasvegas24hours.com **MG**

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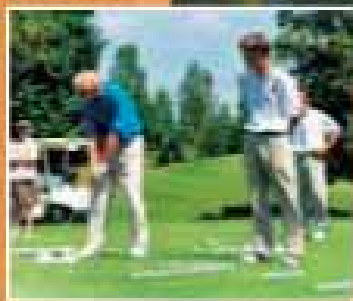
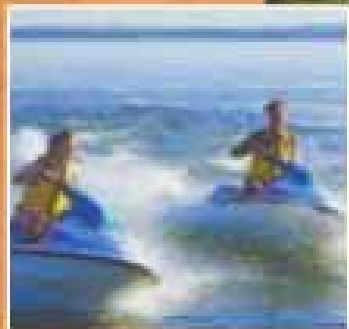


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