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HERB GRAFFIS

SWINGING AROUND GOLF

THANKS FOR A PARTY

In a couple of hundred years brother Joe and I may be able to catch up with the happy duty of thanking each of the fellows who were part of the testimonial dinner the National Golf Foundation staged for us in Chicago, July 29th.

But we never will be able to do it adequately and gracefully.

The fact is that the party was tail-to-end. Joe and I should have been giving it for the fellows who took all the trouble of listening, eating and having a Class Reunion and drinking and who checked in by wire and postage stamp and print. After we got out of a stage of glorious shock and began checking off the fellows we'd seen and heard from, we could name them one by one and give you the stories of these fellows who'd done more for golf than we'd done in making a beautiful living.

That old Scotch line about golf being an humbling game came back to us as we thought of how much trouble it had been for the fellows who'd put on that party for Joe and me and those who went to considerable cost in time, travel, convenience and cash in being among the merry-makers. Many of them as golf association and club officials had given so much to golf they should have been taking the bows.

Golf seems to be a common denominator of grand guys. The 285 at the dinner included notables in every phase of the game and business. The roster was so impressive, it completely bewildered Joe and me.

Joe and I are grateful to you all. Your helpfulness and kindness has made us two of the luckiest mortals in all golf.

The lads who get the journalism scholarship aid under the Western

Golf Association's Chick Evans caddie scholarship plan, we are confident will have the bright good fortune Joe and Herb Graffis have had in golf. It's a privilege, they will find it could be called a blessing. They'll have many opportunities for working with wonderful friends in the pursuit of happiness for everybody.

We read about billionaires in the newspapers. I've known three of them, but that dinner night at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago, I ran through my heart's computer the friends Joe and I had in golf and began realizing that Joe and I may be the world's two richest men ... and on account of golf.

COURSE BOSS ALWAYS INGENIOUS

In these days of highly mechanized maintenance of golf courses, the ingenuity of golf course superintendents continues to amaze me.

Today's management of machines, chemicals and other materials often exhibits an extension of use beyond what the manufacturer's had contemplated. How these men do these things I don't know because it's hard enough to get competent mechanics who can keep mowers adjusted and operating well, repair damage to the watering system and care for misuse of machinery and material.

But the old greenkeepers had that genius they passed along to their heirs, the school-trained superintendents.

Orville Clapper, retired as the Toro New England Distributor has been in Montana in reunion with relatives near the 2,000-acre ranch his father, J. S. Clapper, owned not far from Laurel. There was where Sam Clapper developed the Big Four tractor, the first 4-cylinder gasoline engine tractor, that, after a lot of re-

visions, became the Toro golf course tractor. It was Charley Erickson, greenkeeper at Minikahda at Minneapolis, who was the field research engineer, test pilot, consultant and all-around-man for Clapper when those tractors and its gang mowers were new.

About the same time near Stroudsburg, Pa., near where C. C. Worthington owned the largest individual estate east of the Mississippi, John Dimmick was greenkeeper of Worthington's Sawnee-on-Delaware course. Worthington, a noted engineer, had devised a golf course tractor that was kin to Ford's Model T.

At the Shawnee course where C. C. and his three sons put on the Shawnee Open, John Dimmick worked out in course tests the Worthington tractor ideas and the Worthington ideas for powered gang mowers for greens. When the Jacobsen brothers bought Worthington, they pooled the Worthington ideas with the power green mower features that Jacobsen team had made very practical with collaboration of greenskeepers near their plant at Racine, Wis.

In Dunedin, Florida now lives Kent Bradley. A neighbor is John Inglis, over 90 and still playing golf. John was pro at Fairview Country Club in Elmsford, N. Y. In the late '90s and for around 50 years. Bradley began as a caddie in that area, then got into course maintenance in the New York metropolitan district. Bradley introduced many refinements at courses, including the corner sweed and grommeted tee towel, the fibre glass flag-pole, bunker rakes, fibre glass green dew shippers, and was a pioneer in using wireless communication with his men on the course.

The man in charge of a golf course seems to learn from even his tough luck. I remember John MacGregor, greenskeeper at Chicago Golf Club and an early president of the GCSA, worrying about turf injury where a tractor gas tank had leaked. A few weeks later I saw John with a gimmick he had devised to squirt gasoline on dandelions. It killed them, too.

TEACHERS SEEK LEARNING

Gary Wiren with the PGA

Educational program and Lorraine Abbott with the National Golf Foundation's instruction seminars attended mainly by collegiate golf coaches and P. E. instructors are doing their intelligent and desperate best to modernize golf instruction.

At a National Golf Fund seminar this summer, Mrs. Opal Hill of Kansas City was honored. Opal won the first of her Women's Western Amateur championships in 1920. She has been teaching golf for 38 years and doing about as good a job with her instruction as anyone. Opal is 82. The present pattern of golf instruction is the same as it was before Opal Hill was born.

Golf instruction, experienced professionals agree, is about 25 percent teaching and 75 percent learning; yet the lesson method generally used is the wasteful reverse with 75 percent instruction.

With the present lesson pattern, the waste of good brains and time by intelligent professionals and amateurs is a serious threat to the growth of the game. With all the wealth of personnel available nobody seems to be able to break loose from the old outgrown and too often ineffective method of giving golf lessons. How to get the accent on learning instead of teaching baffles the teachers.

Golf instruction of male adults is the most difficult task in sports coaching. It is handicapped right from the start by inconvenient time and place of the lessons for businessmen and the somber atmosphere of intensive care about the lesson. If I'd spent as much time at the lesson tees of golf clubs, as I've spent in the grill rooms, I would be the Johnny Miller of the Geritol set.

"MONSTER" IS THIN

The Winged Foot and Butler National courses that didn't allow National Open and Western Open champions to break par for 72 holes now are in the "monster" class.

A "monster" course is one that is not easy and which gets the Big Boys belly-aching. It may or not be long, but is always thin. Out about where the long drives go, the fairways narrow to a little wider than 30 yards. Flanking the narrow channels are ravenous bunkers, devouring rough or water that washes hope out of a scorecard.

A. W. Tillinghast, when he designed the Winged Foot course, and George Fazio, who designed Butler National about half a century later, tempted the long hitters to beat themselves. They created, as did other able designers, masterpieces of what was called "the strong back and weak mind" type of architecture. The erring player had only a one-putt chance of getting well and on those elevated snakily contoured greens Tillinghast built at Winged Foot, one putt performances are a matter of skill, luck and prayer.

Tommy Armour, who was a member at Winged Foot after he finished his working pro career, loved playing the exacting Tillinghast course that taught a fellow how to think instead of merely swinging in playing a golf course.

The architect of the awesome bunkers at Winged Foot accounted for eliminating more than 1,000 bunkers on American golf courses while he was the PGA's architectural advisor for a year or so during the 1930s. Tillinghast's expert free advice was a tremendously valuable contribution of the PGA to the clubs of its members.

Back in those days of low maintenance costs "Tilly" told me he estimated that every bunker he recommended removing cost a club at least \$100 a year to maintain and penalized fine members who already were suffering enough at golf.

COURSE TRAFFIC PROBLEM

Something new seems to be popping up frequently in the ancient and honorable game.

In Florida court there is a case in which the plaintiffs sued for an order to run their golf cart free on a course where they play as residential property owners who thought they bought all golfing rights when they purchased their home site in a residential-golf development.

All involved in the litigation presumably are nice people who'd want to have the pleasure of golf and not the trouble and expense of a law suit. Cost of golf cart paths and maintenance and the revenue of club carts, owned or leased, put a phase of equity in the golf car private ownership status that should be settled before the ink dries on the golf-homesite deals.