PARK IT!

COURSE PUTS FOOT DOWN AND CANS GOLF CARS FOR A DAY

By James E. Guyette

At least Mark Twain got to hoof it on the links when he took his famous “good walk spoiled.” These days, many golf courses prohibit players from walking and mandate the use of golf cars. So much for an afternoon stroll.

It’s all a bunch of baloney, insists Chris Briscoe, director of golf at Homestead GC in Midway, Utah. Briscoe will tell you that golf is a game of walking, and that’s why he formally proclaimed June 5 as “Walking Day” at Homestead. Cars will be canned and greens fees reduced to an old-fashioned $10. “It disgusts me when I see courses where you’re not allowed to walk,” Briscoe says.

He recalls with disdain when a round at Pebble Beach Golf Links was “ruined” because course officials insisted he take a cart rather than explore the scenery on foot.

“I would love to see more people walking, and there are a lot of people involved with golf who don’t realize that walking is OK,” Briscoe says, adding that a round at Homestead sans cart takes the same amount of time (about 4 1/2 hours) as a mobile trip around the links.

Too many players have the impression that if there are no cars then there’s no golf, Briscoe laments. He believes Walking Day may get people in step with the benefits — both health- and game-related — of golf car-free play.

“The time it takes to walk from one shot to the next is very important time,” Briscoe observes. “It’s a time to prepare yourself for the next shot. It’s a time to plan strategy for your next shot, it’s a time to talk to your playing partner. It’s a time to take in your surroundings and be thankful you play a game set in a beautiful setting.”

Walking Day was actually the idea of the Homestead Resort’s owner, Kevin Shannon, an English native, who never rode in a “buggy” until he came to the United States.

“You go to Scotland and you see people walking — and they are tougher courses to walk than ours,” Briscoe says.

Reaction from Homestead’s clientele was mixed, Briscoe reports. “We’ve gotten a lot of raised eyebrows,” he says, mainly from younger golfers. “Youngsters and juniors don’t realize that golf is a walking game.” They should watch their golfing elders, Briscoe adds, “You see people in their 80s who are walking, and they’re in good shape.”