

The season to be jolly kicks off in a few weeks. For Judy Hutt, the holiday season is the time of the year to Give 'Em the Bird.

No. Not *that* bird! We're talking about a different species — a flying, feathered fowl. We're talking turkey — and we're talking about giving that turkey to charity.

On Oct. 20, Hutt, owner of Boise, Idaho-based Shadow Valley GC, will host the second Give 'Em the Bird golf outing to benefit the city's food bank. Nearly 150 players will flock to Shadow Valley for golf and a great time. A player's admission is a turkey — to be eaten by Boise's needy on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

A 12-pound bird will get a person a round of golf; a 15 pounder is good for a round and a cart; and a 19 pounder will get one all the fixings — a round, cart, lunch and range balls.

Hutt organized the first outing last December after seeing a disheartening report on the television news: The local food bank had to turn away 200 poor families who had asked for Thanksgiving turkeys because of a bird shortage. The report said the situation would be worse at Christmas.

Hutt and her husband, Ron, immediately brainstormed to come up with an idea to help.

"Every year around Thanksgiving, courses have turkey shoots where they give away turkeys as prizes," Hutt says. "We thought, why can't there be an outing where turkeys are the entry fee?"

It was too late to do something for Thanksgiving, so the Hutt's promoted the event as a benefit for Christmas. The name for the outing didn't come to Judy when some jerk cut her off in traffic — "It just came to me," she says with a laugh. But the media, not surprisingly, loved the name, and local radio and TV stations were happy to promote the event.

"One radio station promoted it as the chance to give Judy the bird," says Hutt, who has owned the popular course for 26 years.

There was one problem: 6 inches of snow covered the course two weeks before the event. But Hutt vowed the show would go on — that golf would be played in the snow with tennis balls, if need be. People were into it. Nearly

For the Holidays, Give 'Em the Bird

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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150 golfers signed up in four days, and almost 150 others had to be turned away.

On the day of the tournament, 200 turkeys were collected, along with \$500. Even folks who weren't playing in the event stopped by to donate turkeys and cash.

"It was a real feel-good day, and everybody had a good time," Hutt says. "The food bank was blown away by what we collected."

Marketing and promotion was the last thing on Hutt's mind when she was organizing Give 'Em the Bird. She just wanted to help the poor. But the event has enhanced the reputation of Hutt and Shadow Valley in the community.

"It has definitely helped our business," she says. "We all need to make a profit, but the goodwill advertising helps."

Shadow Valley, voted by locals as Boise's best public course for three consecutive years, is at 85-percent capacity during the golf season, Hutt says. "The public thinks highly of us," she adds. "You can't put a monetary figure on something like that."

There's a moral to this story: Golf course owners are in the ideal position to assist the less fortunate. You can use your courses to hold fund-raisers and raise money for the needy, not only at the holidays, but throughout the year.

Even though you're not publicity hounds, word will get out about your altruism. And because you don't flaunt your generosity, people will know you're legitimate in your efforts.

Talk about breaking down the stereotype of golf as a game for self-centered, rich folks who don't give a damn about the poor.

So this holiday season, take a cue from Hutt: Give 'Em the Bird.

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