

To celebrate Scottish history on the National Mall, the Smithsonian built a golf hole.



THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

# A Monumental Achievement

BETWEEN THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT AND THE CAPITOL BUILDING, THE SMITHSONIAN PAID TRIBUTE TO THE BIRTHPLACE OF GOLF

By Frank H. Andorka Jr., Managing Editor

**F**rank Morse, construction superintendent for Landscapes Unlimited, could hardly believe his eyes when he went to scope out the firm's latest project on Memorial Day — a 40-yard hole in Washington D.C.'s National Mall.

The hole was part of the Smithsonian Institution's Folklife Festival, held June 25-29 and July 2-6, and was part of a Scottish heritage exhibit.

"I walked down by the White House, the Vietnam Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial, and there was the site for the hole in the middle of it all," Morse says. "On one end of the Mall was the Washington Monument and on the other was the Capitol. I knew I was working on sacred ground."

Each year, the Smithsonian's festival promotes an understanding of domestic and international folk customs, and the featured country in 2003 was Scotland. It originally planned only to feature Barry Kerr of Heritage Golf in St. Andrews, a fourth-generation golf club maker, making wood-shaft clubs. But Kerr called his friend Michael Hurdzan, a principal of the Columbus, Ohio, firm Hurdzan Fry Golf Design, with the idea of creating a hole as a backdrop for his demonstrations.

"I've known Barry for a long time, and when he called me with this idea, I thought it would be cool," Hurdzan says. "So we called the Smithsonian and said we'd like to move some earth on the National Mall to build this hole, and they said OK."

Hurdzan says he loosely modeled the hole after St. An-

## Quotable

**"If my math is right, Tiger has three mansions, a couple of seven-car garages and a blond swimsuit model for a girlfriend. Yep, he's in a slump, all right."**

— *Denver Post* columnist Jim Armstrong on Tiger Woods' "slump."

**"Voice mail is for those businesses who want to insult their customers but lack the staff to do it in person."**

— T. Scott Gross, author of several books, including *Positively Outrageous Service*, during his keynote speech at the National Golf Course Owners Association meeting earlier this year.



**"When I was a younger superintendent, I lost a lot of sleep and stressed a lot over Mother Nature. But I've certainly come to understand that good superintendents have to be able to react to what cards Mother Nature deals you and do the best you can."**

— Chris Ayers, certified superintendent of Lakewood CC in Rockville, Md., on dealing with the wicked curve balls that Mother Nature can throw.

drews' famous 17<sup>th</sup> "Road Hole," replete with three sod bunkers (varying in depth from 4 feet to 6 feet) and an undulating 1,500 square foot green.

"It was fun to watch people come out of the Metro [Washington's subway] station, and the first thing they saw was the hole," Hurdzan says. "You saw them do a double take and scratch their heads as they wondered what in the devil it was."

Morse says the construction disturbed between 6,000 square feet to 7,000 square feet of dirt. The project took four times as long as expected to build because of the rain that inundated the East Coast this spring. Normally, Landscapes Unlimited could have finished the project in

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## Off The Fringe

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seven to 10 days, but it took four weeks instead, he added.

"It was labor-intensive since we had to build the hole by hand," Morse says. "We couldn't bring heavy construction equipment on to the Mall."

Both Landscapes Unlimited and Hurdzan Fry donated their time and labor to making the project a reality, and other vendors donated materials and equipment to the hole.

So which lucky superintendent took care of this hallowed site? That honor fell to Dean Graves, certified superintendent at the Chevy Chase (Md.) Club and a *Golfdom* Advisory Staff member, who says he considered himself more of an advisor to the project. "It rained so much this spring that the last time I went down to look at it [in late June], it looked like Scotland," Graves says, laughing. "It was neat being a part of the project."

Graves says the grounds superintendent of the National Mall asked questions about how to handle washouts in the bunkers and how to mow the greens so they weren't scalped.

After the festival was over, the hole was plowed under, and the Mall was returned to its former state. But for one brief moment, golf held a place among America's greatest monuments.

"I think that it recognizes that golf is a mainstream pursuit

## Marital Bliss and ... Golf

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Get this, author Becky Tirabassi and her husband, sports counselor Roger Tirabassi, have written a

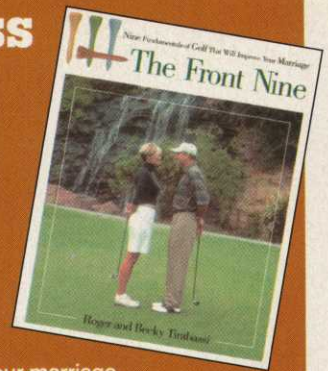
book that says golf *can* help your marriage.

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For more information, contact [www.thefrontnine.com](http://www.thefrontnine.com).



in the United States, and its connection to Scotland proves that it's also universal," Hurdzan says. "For the Smithsonian to put golf front and center in this way was a tribute to the reputation the sport has throughout the world."



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