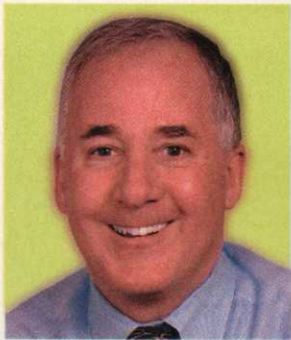


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We can't just wait for former players to find their clubs in the garage.

**RUFFIN BECKWITH**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GOLF 20/20

*Continued from page 29*

than two decades away from retirement. The caveat is that opinions about retirement change the closer people get to that age.

Although baby boomers remain optimistic about their retirement prospects, they indicate that recent economic conditions and investment scandals have tempered financial expectations for retirement, according to surveys by the AARP.

In 2004, just 48 percent of boomers defined retirement as a time to indulge, down seven points from the same AARP Survey in 1998.

Similarly, about 41 percent of boomers said retirement equates to financial security in 1998. Just 31 percent thought the same way in 2004.

Add to the fact that baby boomers will retire later than previous generations, if at all, and the crystal ball gets even cloudier.

Today, about 76 percent of senior golfers are fully retired — and they did so at age 58 — but only about 47 percent of baby-boomer golfers plan to be fully retired at age 64, according to NGF. But even that optimism is out of sync with the sentiments of non-golfing boomers. More than three-quarters of today's workers expect to work for pay when they retire, according to a 2006 study by Pew Research Center. It could be as high as 80 percent among boomers, according to AARP.

In comparison, 12 percent of current retirees work for pay today, according to the Pew survey.

But don't expect most boomers to be Wal-Mart greeters; the lion's share say they will work for enjoyment or launch second careers, which could encourage them to stay in the work force even longer.

"They'll be lucky to retire in their early 70s,

and even if they do retire, they're going to go into another business or perhaps start their own," Goodman says. "There are going to be more entrepreneurial baby boomers in this country by the end of the decade than any other generation."

Squeezing in 18 holes and a cocktail at the clubhouse doesn't appear to be an overwhelming priority for many boomers, but of course there is an upside.

**The silver lining**

Boomers who golf now likely will continue, and their sheer numbers will bolster rounds in the United States. Additionally, about half of former golfers — those who played regularly but did not play at all in 2005 — plan to return to the game when they retire, according to NGF.

"We need to reach out and make a connection with them instead of waiting for them to find their clubs in the garage," Beckwith says.

Many of the characteristics that make baby boomers unique offer opportunities to make those connections sooner rather than later. It's clear that boomers have had profound influences on society, culture and politics. Golf could be next.

That's why catered family programs could pay in spades for the industry if it plays its cards right. While junior golf programs have been the buzz for investing in the future, family golf concepts could reap huge rewards now. Ironically, kids are still the key. Although juniors need their parents and grandparents for money and transportation, purchasing decisions often are made by the children in families.

"There has never been more power over parents and grandparents than these kids have over the boomers," Goodman says.

Family golf is a large focus for Golf 20/20 this year, Beckwith says, adding it will be key to woo boomers to fuel the family concept to create more rounds.

The biggest challenge is time.

"Time is the worst four-letter word in golf now; it's surpassed the other fun four-letter words," says Bob Baldassari, president of the Middle Atlantic PGA Section and general man-

*Continued on page 34*

**How frequently do you think you'll take golf trips in retirement?\***

	Core golfers*	Occasional golfers
Same as now	27%	39%
Less than now	4%	5%
More than now	69%	56%

\*Respondents are baby boomers who are still working. \*Core golfers play 8+ rounds annually. Source: National Golf Foundation, 2006

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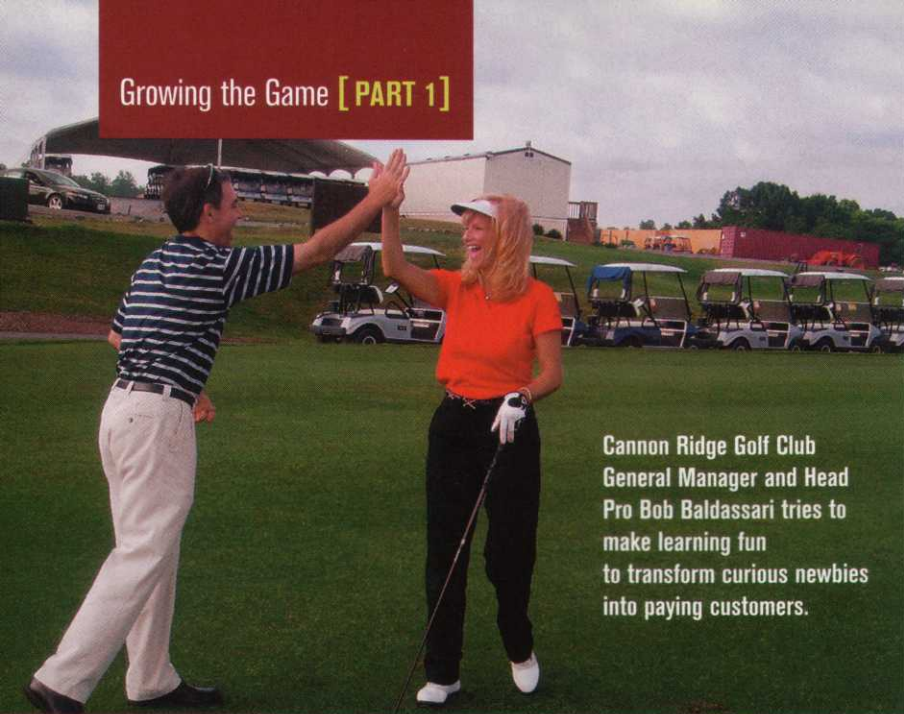
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Cannon Ridge Golf Club General Manager and Head Pro Bob Baldassari tries to make learning fun to transform curious newbies into paying customers.

*Continued from page 32*

ager/head golf pro at Cannon Ridge Golf Club in Fredericksburg, Va.

Baldassari was honored with the PGA President's Plaque for his contributions to growing the game initiatives in conjunction with the Play Golf America campaign. He has developed family golf programs at Cannon Ridge aimed at boomers with kids, a sect starved for time. So he scrutinizes the pace of play, and he allows them to play a la carte, even if they just want to play one or two holes. He also steers a "6/90" program, which aims to help adult beginners shoot in the 90s within six months.

"We're trying to get people out much more frequently instead of waiting for the perfect storm of the weekend and free time for 18 holes," Baldassari says. "I'd rather get you three, four or five times a month for one hole than one time every-other month because then it's becoming a habit."

The driving range and two-hole concept can help build confidence and familiarity, too.

Baldassari says about half of his boomer-aged clients are learners; 30 percent are working on the game, and about 20 percent are getting back into the game.

"I've had people tell me that if I didn't do this, then they would never play here," he says.

Cog Hill Golf and Country Club in Lemont, Ill., hosts what it calls its No Embarrassment lessons to mitigate some of the fear of learning the game. Owner Frank Jemsek says it takes a commitment from participating pros — as well as a pay cut for most of them — but the ones who make the process fun can transform curious newbies into paying customers.

"We try to introduce them to the game so when they do go to the company outing or out in a couples tournament, they won't feel awkward and will have a good time," Jemsek says. "It's an addictive game; the more you play the more you want to play, and we've had good success with that."

Outings, couples tournaments and other social functions can be good ways to drive traffic. Those types of social activities are key reasons they look to golf as they get older, Beckwith says.

"One of the things that our research has shown over the years repeatedly is who you play with and the social aspects are the most important things that bring people back," Beckwith says. "The one shot, the memorable moment we know is key, but also who you play with. At a time in life when people are relocating, moving around and losing some of the people who they play with, I think it's important to bring people together in a social environment."

There should be plenty of opportunity to unite boomers well into their golden years:

*Continued on page 36*

**[ABOUT THIS SERIES]** "Growing the Game," a four-part series that will appear in *Golfdom* throughout 2007, will focus on how the golf industry can attract more new players and create more rounds. In addition to this story on baby boomers, we'll report on what golf course architects are doing in their designs to make the game more friendly for beginner and average golfers. We'll also report on what industry companies are doing to grow the game. Lastly, we'll single out some of the more creative golf courses in the country and discuss the marketing programs they've implemented to attract new golfers.

Visit our archives at [www.golfdom.com](http://www.golfdom.com) to view the 2006 "Growing the Game" series.

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## Talking 'bout My Generation

- There are about 76 million baby boomers.
- 51 percent are women.
- Boomer children (often labeled Generation Y) are called echo boomers or millennials and number about 75 million.
- 80 percent of boomers want to spend more time with family.
- 72 percent want to spend more time on hobbies.
- 71 percent want to do "the things I always wanted to do."
- Just 1 percent say age inhibits their life ambitions.
- 47 percent want to do more volunteering.
- 87 percent want to take better care of their health.
- 54 percent want to quit working as soon as they can, but 37 percent plan to work "until I drop."
- Their average life expectancy is 83.
- 32 percent say they will either struggle financially in retirement or don't have enough to instill confidence in their future; 43 percent say they will have plenty of money, but many still plan to work or volunteer at least part time for enjoyment.
- Boomers spent about \$157 billion on travel in 2004.
- 72 percent took at least one leisure trip in 2004.
- 28 percent have passports.
- They prioritize leisure travel that includes a beautiful, scenic destination that promotes relaxation, has good weather and presents no pressure of schedules to meet.
- 77 percent consider their leisure travel more adventurous than their parents.
- The top five U.S. areas for adventure travel, in order, are Las Vegas, Florida, New York, Hawaii and Colorado.
- 15 percent expect to receive inheritances with a median value of \$64,000, which will total an estimated \$10 trillion during the next few decades.

Sources: AARP, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
 — Compiled by David Frabotta, Senior Editor

### *Continued from page 34*

Almost 62 million Americans will be age 65 to 84 by 2030, compared to less than 34 million today, according to U.S. Census Bureau projections. Advances in healthcare should keep them healthy and active later in life, too, as almost one in five Americans will still be boomers by 2030.

The travel and leisure industries are salivating at those statistics, too. Not only is travel a key activity for retirees, but it's always been a staple in the life of boomers.

"The hottest leisure activity for baby boomers is still traveling on vacation either to a time-share or regular hotel," Goodman says, adding that boomers take their kids on business trips more than any other generation in U.S. history as well. "If they can get three or six holes of golf in (while traveling), it's going to be a major boon for the golfing industry."

About two-thirds of boomer core golfers took at least one overnight golf trip in 2005,

and 69 percent of them think they'll take more trips in retirement, according to NGF

That's good news for resorts and golf destination locations. Charlie Fultz, superintendent of the Shenvalee Golf Resort, says he lives and dies by his on-site customers, so he knows he'll need to cater to that crowd as they age.

Subsequently, he's established a dedicated set of senior tees, and he knows he must relax golf car rules for his senior outings and senior groups, a strategy he thinks will help keep boomers coming back.

"I imagine that baby boomers are going to play until they can't play due to health or age, and if you are forcing them to play a 6,600-yard golf course at 75, that's not going to be nearly as enjoyable as it was when they were 40," Fultz says.

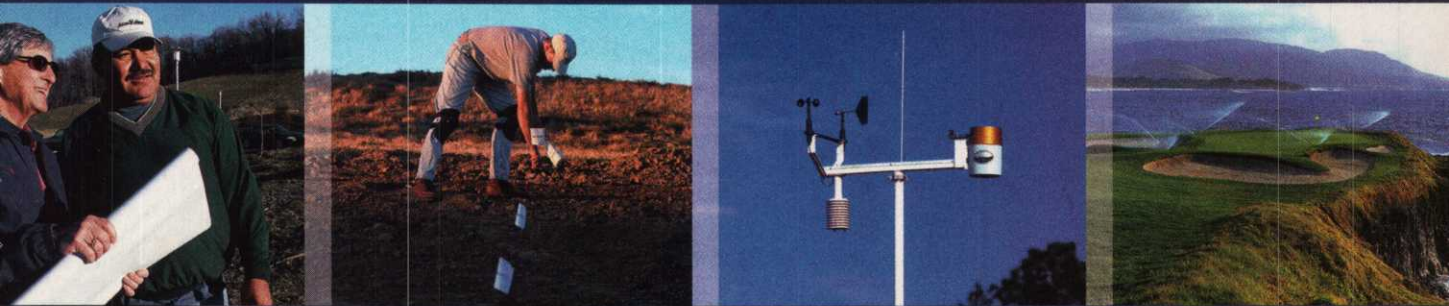
Car path rules might need a hard look, too. Fultz says agronomy might suffer a bit, but it's going to be a necessity for wallet share and repeat business.

"If I have a hotel full of 75-year-old people who don't get around as well as they used to and my golf course is a little wet, then the question of business versus golf course comes into effect," Fultz says. "And the business is going to win, unfortunately, 99 times out of 100. So those rules are going to be relaxed, even if it means taking a hit on the golf course."

Of course, it's difficult to make sweeping generalizations about 76 million people. Each has individual priorities and motivations. But that individuality is a good lesson for the industry. Relationships are more important than brands, and unlocking the keys to the financial kingdom likely will require a metamorphosis of marketing and an emphasis on relevance for boomers and succeeding generations alike.

"Getting them engaged in the game has to be connected to something — family, charity, friends or health and staying fit, especially if we encourage walking," Beckwith says. "Just saying come play golf isn't going to be enough. It's got to be linked to something that is relevant in their life in a different way.

"Fishing makes a big deal out of grandfather taking the kids to learn how to fish," he says. "I don't know why golf can't capitalize on that as well." ■



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# SHOW

From new products to giveaways, here are some of the things companies will do and display at GIS this month

**D**on't look now, but the trade show floor for the Golf Industry Show at the Anaheim Convention Center just got bigger. With the Club Managers Association of America

joining the event this year, set for Feb. 22 through Feb. 24, the show floor has grown to 298,000 net square feet from 270,760 net square feet from the inaugural GIS held in Orlando in 2005.

What's the take-home message here? Make sure you bring your Dr. Scholl's Massaging Gel Heel Cushions for the long jaunts you'll be taking on the floor. You'll need 'em.

Speaking of the floor, it will be inhabited by all of your favorite suppliers. And many of them will be touting new or improved products. And there will be plenty of giveaways, too.

*Golfdom* has learned of some — but not all — of what you'll find in Anaheim. Here's a preview:

## ◀ Work of art

Turf Merchants will give away a painting by artist/illustrator Bernie Fuchs. Superintendents can enter their business cards in a drawing for the painting at Turf Merchants' booth.

Turf Merchants President Steve Tubbs (pictured left) will present the painting of the 27-inch-by-37-inch early-morning golf course scene of the chipping green at Mountaingate Country Club in Los Angeles, which is signed by Fuchs, to the winner. Fuchs is creator of the Legends of Golf and the Masters at Augusta series of paintings, and he was the American Sports Art Museum and Archives 1991 Sports Illustrator of the Year.

